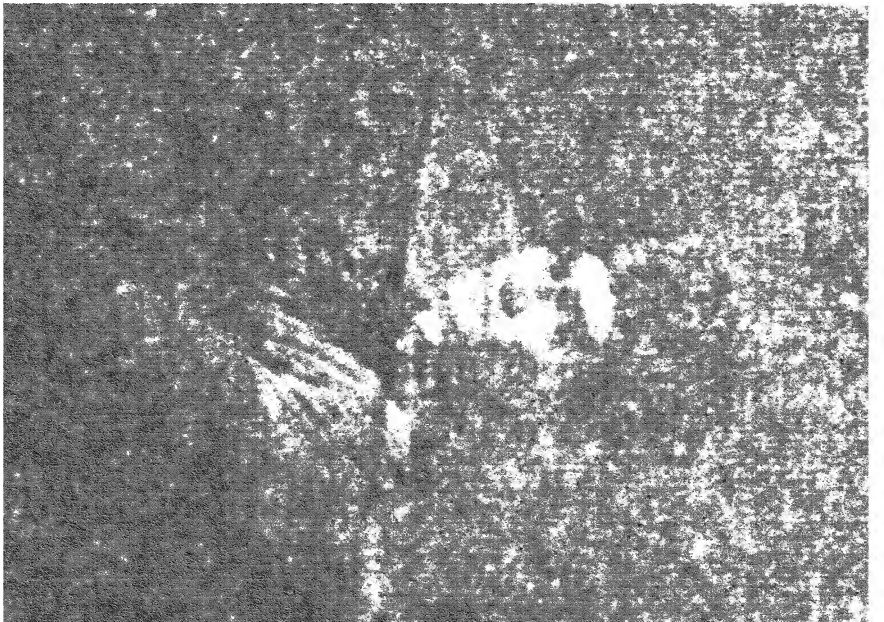

ROUSSEAU AND THE WOMEN HE LOVED

BY

FRANCIS GRIBBLE

AUTHOR OF "MADAME DE STAËL AND HER LOVERS,"
"GEORGE SAND AND HER LOVERS," ETC.

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PREFACE

✦

It is commonly assumed that philosophies are more interesting and important than philosophers. Sometimes they are. It depends on the philosopher—and also on the philosophy. The case of Darwin is an example of the rule; the case of Rousseau is an exception to it.

The personality of Darwin matters to no one, because there is no "personal note" in Darwinism. Darwin is the ideal seeker after truth, assuming nothing, trying to prove everything, slowly feeling his way by laborious induction to a great generalisation. His conclusions no more depend upon his temperament, character, habits, and antecedents than the sum total of a column of figures depends upon the colour of the hair of the man who adds them up. In his case the philosophy is indeed "the thing," and the philosopher is only of incidental interest.

Rousseau's case is very different. He is no dispassionate investigator, and he does not proceed inductively. He does not seek to establish generalisations, but starts with them, making them, as the schoolboy made the wooden boat, "out of his own head." He was "a dangerous man," said Morellet, because his conclusions always follow from his pre-

misses; but who shall answer for his premisses? One can only say that he answered for them himself that they are the reflection of his illuminations. It follows that, in his case, it is not the philosophy but the "personal note" that matters; and the student of his life and teaching need not be afraid of making too much of the personal note. The fear of not making enough of it would be more reasonable, for if the personal note were abstracted, very little would remain.

He himself attached much importance to the personal note—more, perhaps, than any other philosopher of equal mark before or after him. He never permits us to picture him as the humble labourer at a philosophic task which he perceives to be greater than himself. "He knows about it all, he knows; he knows." He is far more concerned to express himself than to read the riddle of the painful earth. He gives us not a philosophy but opinions. He never lets us forget that they are *his* opinions, and that he is more than they. His fear, in the face of persecution, is not that truth may be hindered from prevailing, but that he—Jean Jacques—may be ignored, or misrepresented, or aspersed.

It was his habit to speak of himself in the third person; and he nearly always spoke of himself not as Rousseau, but as Jean Jacques. Bernardin de Saint Pierre says that he did so because the name reminded him of the happy days of his childhood. M. de Francueil says that he used his Christian name as a title of distinction "because he could not call himself 'monseigneur.'" Whatever his motive, the practice is an example of his insistence on the personal note.

Preface

If we try to picture Darwin referring to himself as "Charles," or Kant calling himself "Immanuel," we perceive the significance of the trait. There were many Rousseaus, but there was only one Jean Jacques. That was the fact which, so far as in him lay, he was resolved to keep before the world. There is his deliberate challenge to the biographer.

Philosophy was to him what art is to others "life seen through a temperament." Hence the propriety of realising the temperament as a prelude to the consideration of the philosophy. A work on "Charles Darwin and the Women he Loved," or "the domestic affections had not enticed to Darwin, or on "Immanuel Kant and the Women he Loved," if the celibate of Koenigsberg had ever been melted to tenderness by female charms, would only minister to an idle curiosity. A work on "Rousseau and the Women he Loved" may be a contribution to the history of philosophic thought. That was Rousseau's own opinion, for he wrote such a work in his *Confessions*. That is also the opinion of most of his critics. *Le vrai Rousseau est ne de femmes*, is the verdict of Michelet.

An apology may perhaps seem to be needed for approaching a subject on which Lord Morley has written so fully and so well. The excuse is that, since Lord Morley's *Life* was published, many students have searched with constant diligence in public and private archives, and many new facts of interest and significance have been brought to light.

The present writer is under special obligations to the works of MM. Eugène Ritter, Albert de Mortet,

François Mugnier, Auguste de Montaigu, Fritz Berthoud, Léo Claretie and Albert Jansen, and the Comte de Villeneuve-Guibert. All these writers have made valuable discoveries, though the results of their researches are not, in all cases, readily accessible to the general reader.

M. Ritter has specialised on Rousseau's early life at Geneva.[1] We owe to him many interesting particulars as to the moral laxity and frivolity of several members of the Rousseau family who were arraigned on various charges before the ecclesiastical courts. He has also thrown fresh light on Rousseau's love affair with Suzanne Serre of Lyons. The history of Madame de Warens' early life and flight from Vevey has to be rewritten in the light of the remarkable documents printed by M. de Montet in his monograph on *Madame de Warens et le Pays de Vaud*, published by the Société d'Histoire de la Suisse Romande. The gross inexactitude of Rousseau's own account of his life at Chambéry and Les Charmettes is demonstrated by the documents published by M. Mugnier in *Madame de Warens et Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. M. de Montaigu has printed family letters setting forth the grounds of Rousseau's dismissal from the service of the French Ambassador at Venice. M. Berthoud has filled in many details in the picture of his life in exile in *J.-J. Rousseau au Val de Travers*. Other piquant and graphic particulars of the same period are contained in the *Correspondence avec Madame Roy de la Tour*, published by M. Claretie. M. Jansen has collected all the available information concerning the circumstances in which Jean Jacques wrote his

[1] In *La famille de Jean Jacques Rousseau*.

Confessions and read them aloud. *Le portefeuille de Madame Dupin*, by M. de Villeneuve-Guibert, illuminates Jean Jacques' relations, amorous and otherwise, with one of the most interesting of his benefactresses.

With all this new information available but scattered, the attempt to assemble the new facts in a new Life of a philosopher whose personality is perennially interesting seemed to be justified.

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ROUSSEAU AND THE WOMEN HE LOVED

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THE dramatic beginning of the story is on the day of the flight of the idle apprentice—the vagabond who was to become a philosopher and shake the world. He had been whipped more than once, and had reason to fear that he would be whipped again. The effect of the whippings had been cumulative, and now terror overcame him. He ran from Geneva to Savoy, and found a refuge with Madame de Warens—herself a fugitive, for her own reasons, from Vevey.

Rousseau and the Women he Lov

Both the French Revolution and the Rom
Movement have sometimes been dated from
escapade; and though that is a picturesque exag
tion, each of the two developments owed a good
to the adventure. They were what they were, la
if not entirely, because Rousseau was what he
and Rousseau would never have become wh
became if he had not run away from home. Pe
we may best sum up the significance of the inc
by saying that here, at last, was a man of genius
was to get an education somehow, but was not
brought up according to the rules.

The rules, if he had had to submit to them, w
have taught him a good deal which he never l
and which it would have been good for him to l
He might have learnt from a more normal traini
be more sure of himself in society, and so to ho
own without being boorish or quarrelsome. O
the reasons why this Friend of Humanity fail
signally to live on terms of personal friendship
his fellows may assuredly be found in the porcu
like touchiness of the man who has never be
school. A more normal training, again, might
taught him that there is a time to keep silence a
as a time to speak; and we might consequently
been spared those breaches of good taste in
Confessions which have pained admirers and e
cynics to declare the one obvious criticism upon
work to be that no gentleman could possibly
written it.

In these respects vagabondage and the haphaz
undisciplined life indubitably did Rousseau l
On the other hand, its conditions favoured

spontaneity of his genius, enabling him to start afresh and kindle a new torch instead of handing on the old one. He thought—and also felt—for himself; he gushed fearlessly, and so awoke responsive chords in the bosoms of the men and women—especially the women—who longed to gush but hitherto had not dared to do so. The first of those who sincerely preferred wild nature to a cultivated garden, he was also the first of those who made fiction personal and sentimental, and political philosophy emotional. And all this may be said, with broad truth, to have happened because he ran away from Geneva and became a vagabond.

Before we come to that, however, there are a few words to be said about Rousseau's family history. His *Confessions* tell us little on this branch of the subject—probably because he knew but little. His biographers, from Musset-Pathay to Lord Morley, tell us very little more—probably for the same reason. But M. Eugène Ritter has lately searched all manner of Genevan archives, and not only re-established the genealogy in full detail but discovered, from the examination of old wills and the old Registers of the Council and Consistory,[1] what manner of men and women Jean-Jacques' ancestors were—what were their worldly circumstances and what their moral obliquities. We must begin with that.

The first Rousseau to come to Geneva was Didier, son of Antoine, who arrived in 1549—a Protestant refugee—and sought and obtained permission to open

[1] The Court of Ecclesiastical Discipline established at Geneva by Calvin.

an inn and hang out a signboard. The calling was of higher repute in those days than in these, and the innkeepers had functions assigned to them as guardians of the morals of the community. The law enjoined them, among other things, to see to it that every guest said grace both before and after meat, and to impose a fine of sixty sous upon every hungry man who forgot to do so. Didier Rousseau discharged this duty to the satisfaction even of Calvin, with the result that, when the religious dictator felt the need of strengthening his party in the State, the innkeeper was admitted to the full rights of citizenship as one of his supporters. The tax paid on his admission was twenty crowns, which proves him to have been a man of substance; and it appears that he was a bookseller as well as an innkeeper, and also a publican, in the sense of a farmer of the taxes.

In 1569, Didier Rousseau married Mie Miège, the daughter of a peasant of Contamine-sur-Arve in Savoy, who bore him five children. Four of them died in infancy. The youngest, Jean Rousseau, was only two years old when his father died in 1581. This Jean Rousseau the First became a tanner, and prospered. He married Elizabeth Bluet, of a family of French refugees, and brought up his only son, Jean Rousseau the Second, to be a watchmaker. The watchmaker begot nineteen children, and was excused the payment of certain imposts in consideration of this service to the State. Notwithstanding his heavy expenses, he amassed something more than a competence. The inheritance which his ten surviving children divided amounted to 31,000 florins.

The only member of the family who concerns us

here is the seventh son, David. He followed his father's trade, and at the age of twenty-four married Suzanne Cartier, the daughter of a tanner and the granddaughter of a notary. He held the public office of *Dizenier*—a kind of magistrate of no great importance; and he was summoned on three separate occasions before the Council or the Consistory to answer to charges of misconduct. On the first occasion he was convicted of employing a Catholic foster-nurse for one of his daughters, and was ordered to give the woman a week's notice to go; on the second, he was reprimanded for allowing dancing to take place in his house within a few months of his wife's death; on the third, he was admonished for annoying the French Resident by permitting a bonfire to be lighted outside his front door in celebration of the triumph of Protestantism at the battle of the Boyne. He had fourteen children, of whom six grew up, and he lived to be nearly a hundred. His son Isaac, the father of Jean-Jacques, married Suzanne Bernard; and it will be proper to pause and examine her family tree before proceeding with the narrative.

The family came from Arare, a village at the foot of the Salève, and the heads of the house had been citizens of Geneva since 1596. Samuel Bernard, born in 1596, was a clerk in the office of his godfather, a cloth merchant. He married the cloth merchant's daughter and was taken into partnership. He was a man of merit, taste, and culture; he collected books, and is said to have had the best library of any tradesman of the town in his time. His eldest son walked soberly in his father's footsteps, and became a pastor. The youngest, Jacques, was a

mauvais sujet; and the *mauvais sujet* was Jacques' grandfather. He, like David Rousseau in far more serious circumstances, had his tro with the Consistory.

That famous Court of Ecclesiastical Disci dating from Calvin's time, exercised jurisdicti many matters which nowadays are left, even i most religious communities, to the taste and judg of the individual citizen. Composed of five pa and twelve pious laymen, it was empowered to for any inhabitant of the town, young or old, or female, whose conduct was unsatisfactory, de explanations, deliver rebukes, and, when neces pass the case on to the Council for punishment is on record that it once dealt severely with a w for wearing her hair hanging down her back, with a man for walking abroad in baggy kn bockers. As time progressed, the range o severities was by degrees restricted; but it rem severe. In particular it insisted upon circumspe in the relations between young men and maid and it was an irregularity falling under this head brought Jean-Jacques' grandfather before it.

He and his partner in guilt were not onl primanded but imprisoned. They were caught tinuing their intimacy within the prison walls, were, as a punishment, put for ten days on a of bread and water. On his release Jean Rou was required to do public penance and pro amendment on his knees, but he was again bro before the Court for a repetition of the of before twelve months had passed, though this he was let off with a fine of one hundred cr

Then at last he settled down, married Anne-Marie Machard, the daughter of a lawyer, and died at the age of thirty-three, leaving four children, in 1682.

His daughter Suzanne—Jean-Jacques' mother—was brought up by her uncle the pastor; but his pious guardianship did not prevent her from attracting the unfavourable notice of the ecclesiastical authorities. One of her delinquencies consisted in attiring herself in a peasant's dress in order to attend a theatrical performance. She was a high-spirited young woman, and when summoned before the Consistory, she refused to go. An officer of the Court had to be sent to fetch her; but she appears to have been let off with a scolding. Her other appearance before the Court was due to the persistent attentions paid to her by one Vincent Sarasin, a married man.

"It was represented" (we read in the Register) "that M. Vincent Sarasin went one day this week to visit Mlle Bernard in her garden, and that, finding the door shut, he tore down the hedge of the adjoining garden and forced a passage through it, but then, meeting the pastor Bernard, was compelled to withdraw by the same route by which he had entered; also that he returned shortly afterwards and knocked at the door, expecting to find Mlle Bernard waiting for him there, and that he did this several times, notwithstanding his promise not to try to see her again."

The fault, it is clear, was not of a very serious character. M. Sarasin should in justice have

borne most of the blame, and probably he did. At all events he apologised to the Court for the transgression, and we read that "it was decided, at his request, to allow him to receive the Holy Communion for his consolation." Apparently the privilege did console him, for we hear no more of the incident, and meet no further mention of the name of Suzanne Bernard until the time of her marriage with Isaac Rousseau.

Isaac was a watchmaker who, for a time, abandoned his trade in order to become a dancing-master. His disposition was vivacious, and in the days of his youth he was sent to prison for quarrelling in the street with some English officers who were visiting the town. Seeing that, if we may trust the depositions, the strangers called him a "counter-jumper," knocked him down, drew their swords on him, and chased him until he found refuge in an inn, it seems more than likely that there was a miscarriage of justice in this instance. The judges of Geneva were very prone in those days to support the foreigner against the native as an encouragement to tourists to spend money in the town, and the episode did not harm Isaac Rousseau in the eyes of his contemporaries or hinder him from making a good marriage. He was a poor man, and his bride was not only beautiful but brought him a fortune of fourteen thousand florins. The account of the circumstances of the union given in the *Confessions* is as follows :—

"Gabriel Bernard, my mother's brother, fell in love with one of my father's sisters ; but she would

onsent to marry the brother except on condition her brother should marry the sister. Love ged everything, and the two marriages took on the same day."

his poetical statement, however, only illustrates -Jacques' inaccuracy. There was, as a matter ct, an interval of nearly five years between wo marriages. That of Gabriel Bernard and odora Rousseau was celebrated in the autumn 699—in conditions which attracted the attention at Consistory already so often mentioned. The tial entries in the Register are as follows :—

October 3, 1699.—Reported that the daughter avid Rousseau and Bernard have got married, anticipating the ceremony nine months ago. Decided to enter the matter in the minutes, to send for her after the child is born."

October 19, 1699.—Pastor Sarasin reports that aptized the child of Gabriel Bernard and Théo- Rousseau eight days after their marriage. Decided to enter the matter in the minutes and non the offenders to appear at the end of a ight."

November 2, 1699.—Gabriel Bernard and his Théodora Rousseau appeared before us, sum- ed to answer to the charge of scandalous anticipa- of their marriage. Decided to censure them severely, and exclude from the Lord's Supper."

"*March* 14, 1700.—Gabriel Bernard and Théodora his wife appeared before us to solicit permission to receive the Holy Communion, which they had been forbidden to do because of their scandalous anticipation of their marriage: which privilege is accorded to them in consideration of the proofs which they have given of their repentance."

That is the story; and it calls for no comment except in relation to Jean-Jacques' statement that his three aunts were "all good and virtuous." *Il y a des degrés*, in this matter of virtue as in other matters; and the virtue of Jean-Jacques' aunt, who was five or six years older than her husband, appears to have belonged only to the comparative degree.

Against his mother, however, no analogous accusations of levity could be preferred. The transgressions which brought her before the Consistory for admonition in her girlhood were, as we have seen, very trivial. It was not her fault that her bright eyes were magnets which drew trespassers into her uncle's garden; no woman need be ashamed of a past which has no darker spot in it than that. As a matron she incurred no reproach, though her husband exposed her to temptation.

He married her on June 2, 1704. She bore him a son, François, on March 15, 1705; and then he left her, and went to live for six years in Constantinople.

The motive for this sudden departure is not known. If Isaac Rousseau had been implicated in any grave scandal, we should probably have some record of it; and the dates confute the theory that

as embroiled in one of the many Genevan
ations. His reasons must therefore have been
private and personal nature, and M. Ritter sug-
that he fled from the wrath of his mother-in-
She had backed a bill which he had accepted
vas unable to meet, and she was living in the
house with him,—facts which give colour to the
sition but do not remove it from the region of
cture. All that is certain is that, on June 22,
Isaac Rousseau gave his wife a power of
ey to manage his affairs during his absence,
g on the point of setting out for a journey,"
nat he returned in October 1711, the bearer of
er from the pastor of the Protestant church at
to the Venerable Company at Geneva.

l" (writes Jean-Jacques) "was the melancholy
of this return. Ten months later I was born,
and ill. I cost my mother her life, and my
was the first of my misfortunes."

nzanne Rousseau died, in fact, not in childbirth,
puerperal fever, about a fortnight later.

CHAPTER II

Character of Isaac Rousseau—His trouble with the authorities and his flight to Nyon—Jean-Jacques left in charge of Gabriel Bernard—Boarded out in the house of Pastor Lambercier—Whipped by Mlle Lambercier—Apprenticed to Abel Ducommun—He steals asparagus—He reads novels and is idle—Beaten by his master, he runs away from Geneva—He takes refuge with M. de Pontverre, who converts him to Catholicism and sends him to Madame de Warens at Annecy.

THERE have been better fathers—but there have also been worse fathers—than the watchmaker-dancing-master, Isaac Rousseau.

He was one of those people who get full credit for their virtues because little is expected of them—to whom much is forgiven because they are amiable in their vices. People liked him, though they could not approve of him. He was a genial egoist, hot-tempered, capricious, irresponsible.

His egoism stands out in all the records of those frequent brawls and troubles which got him into trouble with the authorities. A significant refrain runs through the depositions of all the witnesses to the ebullitions of his violence. Whenever his temper explodes, we find him defying the enemy, be he citizen or stranger, with the exclamation: "I am Rousseau! I am Rousseau!" He seems to have said it with a fine arrogance, much as if he were

announcing himself as the Lord's anointed, on whom hands must not be laid. The arrogance did not save him from imprisonment, as we have seen, or from exile, as we are about to see; but it strikes one as rather an engaging trait—the sort of childish vanity that helps us to like the man at whom we laugh.

His caprices made him a very bad father indeed to his eldest son. He treated the boy with such severity that he ran away from home and was no more heard of; probably, though this is only a guess, he enlisted in some foreign army. But Jean-Jacques was treated better. Isaac Rousseau's caprice, in his case, spelt kindness, though the kindness was ill-considered and intermittent, and the affection was guided by no sustained sense of parental obligation. One of the happiest of Jean-Jacques' early recollections was that he and his father used to sit up all night together reading novels—the works of La Calprenède and Mlle de Scudéry—and that, when dawn broke and found them at their amusement, his father exclaimed, "Come along to bed! I am as big a baby as you are." A strange education surely for a child who when it terminated was only ten!

It terminated because Isaac Rousseau had come into conflict with the law by trespassing in pursuit of game. The fact is not mentioned in the *Confessions* but it is on the record of the Court. Jean-Jacques speaks only of a row in the streets, adding that his father, having punched his antagonist on the nose and made it bleed, was unjustly accused of drawing his sword against him. As a matter of fact, he was out shooting, had invaded a neighbour's cornfield, had been ordered off, and had refused to go,

using threats and violent language. He propos
duel, but was told that gentlemen did not fight
dancing-masters but only caned them. Then
was a scuffle, and, the matter coming before
Court, Isaac Rousseau was sentenced to apol
on his knees, to pay a fine of fifty crowns and
and to go to prison for three months. To avoi
punishment, he went into exile at Nyon, whe
presently married a second wife, leaving Jean-Jac
at Geneva, to be brought up by his uncles
aunts.

The place of his mother had already been t
by his Aunt Suzanne, his father's younger s
who came to keep house for her brother. She
like so many members of the family on both
had in her younger days incurred the reprob
of the Consistory. She had stayed at home
Sunday to play cards during the hours of d
service, and had been "censured and exhorted
again to cause so great a scandal." It was
very grave delinquency; and we know little
about Madame Gonceru, *née* Rousseau, except
Jean-Jacques was deeply attached to her, n
forgot her goodness to him, and in her old
made her an allowance.

On his father's departure, however, Jean-Jac
was not left in her charge but in that of his u
Gabriel Bernard, an engineer and a traveller
had witnessed the siege of Belgrade and was t
at Charleston, South Carolina, but was just the
work on the fortifications of Geneva. "My un
writes the nephew, "was a man of pleasure like
father. My aunt"—the Aunt Théodora who

been censured for "scandalous anticipation of her marriage"—"was a religious woman, inclined to pietism and much fonder of singing psalms than of looking after children." That may be the reason why they boarded him out, together with their own son, in the house of Pastor Lambercier of Bossey and his sister.

Biographers have usually taken Lambercier for granted as a typically simple and pious country clergyman, but both the Catholics over the border in Savoy and the Venerable Company at Geneva have borne witness that his conduct was, at the least, lacking in circumspection. The neighbouring curé of Confignon ridiculed him in a pamphlet, declaring that it was his custom every morning to go into his sister's bedroom and help her to dress and tire her hair. The Venerable Company had to investigate more specific charges, and, while finding the gravest of the accusations "not proven," deemed it well to lecture the pastor on the levity which had exposed him to suspicion. He has, however, no such importance in this story that we need attempt to go behind the judgment. The sojourn at Bossey is remarkable for one thing only—for the whipping by Mlle Lambercier, the recollection of which caused Jean-Jacques to take what he calls "the first and most painful step in the obscure and muddy path of my confessions."

"Muddy" the path indubitably is, and this particular confession has probably done more harm to Jean-Jacques' reputation than anything else that he ever wrote, as it has certainly caused more perplexity to his biographers. The pathological discussion

which it might provoke cannot possibly find a
in a book intended for general reading, and
ignore the passage altogether would be to app
shirk an issue. Lord Morley happily has saic
may almost be accepted as the last word upc
subject, which is, that "when the great art
has been more systematically conceived in the
processes of time and endeavour, and when
bold, effective, and far-reaching advance has
made in defining those pathological manifest
which deserve to be seriously studied, as distingu
from those of a minor sort which are barely
registering, then we shall know better how to
or how to be silent, in the present most unwe
instance." This is admirable; but perhaps th
something to be added.

The great conspiracy of silence makes it i
sible to adopt any comparative method in meas
the importance of the pathological phenomenon
under our notice, but there is one rule whic
may take for our guidance. The child is onl
portant to the biographer in so far as he is the
of the man. That must be held to be true
depravities of childhood as well as of its other
acteristics. Are they of a piece with the care
the man considered as a whole? Should we
been at all likely to argue back to them and
them from what we know of his behaviour aft
had reached the years of knowledge and discre
These are the questions which we have to ask
selves; and where, as in Rousseau's case, the a
is in the negative, justice seems to enjoin us to
silence. Otherwise, our prejudices being arc

our sense of proportion will be lost, and the portrait which we draw will be distorted.

All allowances made, it remains, of course, a matter for surprise and regret that Rousseau should himself have spoken. "Moral courage" is Lord Morley's explanation. It was a moral courage which served no useful end, and we may hope that Jean-Jacques did not exercise it when considering, in his old age, which portions of his *Confessions* he would read aloud to ladies. Some curious mental twist—some morbidity, the outcome of an unsociable and solitary life—seems an explanation that may be not less plausibly invoked. Jean-Jacques may have argued that, if he began by holding himself up to shame, he would be believed when he subsequently held himself up to admiration. It is impossible to say. But we know that he grew up to live, save in respects that will have to be noted, pretty much as other people lived—that he kept a mistress and begot children—that his writings, whatever their faults, were never tinged with impurity. These facts would count for the physician in the consulting-room, and they must also count for the biographer and his readers.

We shall find a good deal to reprobate in Jean-Jacques' conduct as we proceed; we shall also find a good deal to laugh at. Among the great names of history one does not meet a more curious blend of the blackguard and the idealist. But we must not start with a prejudice against him, even though the grounds for it are his own gift to us. If it were permitted to colour our view of him at all, it would colour it too deeply. That is why we shall do best

not merely, as Lord Morley says, in "chronicling the fact and passing on," but in passing on and forgetting all about it, writing of him and thinking of him as if it had never been brought to our knowledge.

The rest of the events of his childhood may be passed over lightly. The record is that of an unsatisfactory apprentice who came to no good, in the first case because he was grossly unfit for the business chosen for him, and in the second case because he was placed in the hands of a master who was grossly incapable of managing him.

When he left Bossey, a position was found for him in the office of a notary; but that is a calling which men of genius have always regarded with aversion. Sénancour, the author of *Obermann*—to name no others—fled from France and went into exile rather than become a notary. Jean-Jacques tried, or perhaps only pretended to try, to learn the duties of the profession, but was soon sent home as hopelessly incompetent. According to the *Confessions*, there then followed a period of "two or three years" during which he lived with the Bernards, frequently visiting his father at Nyon; and it is to this interval that he ascribes his peculiar adventure with Mademoiselle Goton. For the details of that curious episode, the inquisitive may be referred to Jean-Jacques' own pages; but there is some reason to believe that the narrative is more morbid than veracious. Certainly the incidents cannot, as he says, have extended over a period of two or three years, for it has been proved that he only spent three or four months at Nyon. At the end of that time, on April 26, 1725,

he was apprenticed to Abel Ducommun, the engraver, to whom a premium of 300 livres was paid.

The choice of a teacher was unfortunate, and shows how little Isaac Rousseau and Gabriel Bernard realised their respective responsibilities as parent and guardian. Abel Ducommun was only twenty years of age, violent, tyrannical, and anything but "steady." Though he was of a good family and had a good trade, he came to a bad end, dying in a pauper's bed in a hospital. He beat Jean-Jacques for imaginary as well as real offences; and Jean-Jacques feared and hated him, and, in retrospect, held him responsible for a rapid degradation of his own character.

Probably that degradation was also in some degree imaginary. Rousseau's reminiscences of his youthful peccadilloes, like Bunyan's, suggest a morbid exaggeration. He certainly stole apples; but, though that offence is not one that the moralist need go out of his way to palliate, it has been committed too often and by too many boys to be held to demonstrate unique depravity. He also stole asparagus—a more reprehensible because a more deliberate theft; but he did not steal very much of it, and only stole it at all under the pressure of an elder's request. If these two acts of guilt constitute, as they seem to do, the sum total of the basis of fact on which his self-reproaches rest, one assuredly need not waste time in dwelling upon that branch of the subject. Far more important, from the biographer's point of view, than any of these petty pilferings was his habit of reading novels.

He had begun this habit, as we have seen, under his father's eye; he continued it as the youthful

patron of a circulating library kept by a v
named Tribu.

"La Tribu" is mentioned in the *Confessio*
her name is also to be met in the Register
Consistory. She was haled before that body, f
first time, in 1717, at the instance of an ind
husband who had caught his wife in the act of
ing *Le Jésuite en belle humeur*, borrowed fro
establishment; and her catalogue was then sub
to a pastor for scrutiny and expurgation. Her
appearance was in 1727, when the charge wa
she encouraged young people to frequent her s
the hours sacred to public worship. Jean-J
tells us that he "exhausted her scanty stock,
that his master, when he caught him reading
the books away from him and burnt them o
them up, and that when he lacked the money f
subscription he paid in kind, exchanging now
and now a neck-tie for a novel. "Good book
bad," he adds, had an equal fascination for him.

The list is not before us, and we can ma
comment on that statement. Certainly it is p
that La Tribu's shop included works not enum
in the catalogue which received ecclesiastical app
but the possibility need not perturb us. When
reads good books as willingly as bad ones, it s
fair inference that the bad ones are not corr
either his morals or his taste; he gets no harm
what he does not understand. The essential th
that literature did make its appeal to Jean-Ja
even in the days when he stole asparagus to ob
friend; and that fact makes the asparagus
which led to nothing, insignificant. And he re

we can see, not in the spirit of the bookworm, but as one whose mind the books were opening to the world outside the city walls—a world in which there were adventures for the adventurous. His reading—since it was only romances that he read—prepared him for the day when he would wander forth, cutting himself off from all familiar associations, to encounter the unknown. His flight was in one sense an act of cowardice, but in another it was an act of courage.

He had been beaten for stealing apples; he had been beaten for stealing asparagus; he had been beaten with especial severity for allowing himself to be locked out of Geneva at the hour when the city gates were shut. For this last offence he had been punished twice, and he had been threatened with the direst penalties if ever he repeated it. He was careless, and found himself locked out for the third time, and then he was afraid to go home. His companions laughed, but for him it was no laughing matter. "There where I stood," he writes, "I swore an oath that I would never return to my master"; and, having remained with the others until daybreak, he then said good-bye to them, and turned his back upon Geneva, and walked away.

He had no plans, no prospects; he did not know in the least what would befall him. But he knew very well what would happen if he returned to Abel Ducommun; and fortune could hardly have anything more painful in store for him than that. His family, no doubt, would have to pay damages for this breach of the articles of his apprenticeship; but what did that matter? They had treated him cruelly in placing him at Abel Ducommun's mercy; and he was at war with

the world, as only a clever, misunderstood boy can be; and the reading of romance had trained him for the quest of adventure. He would seek adventure, shaking the dust of the past from off his feet.

His wanderings brought him to the house of M. de Pontverre, curé of Confignon—the same curé of Confignon who had ridiculed Pastor Lambercier for acting as his sister's lady's-maid—a proselytising priest now seventy-five years of age. He gave the wanderer a good dinner, and converted him to the Catholic faith. Since he took that trouble, we may assume that Jean-Jacques impressed him as a lad of parts and promise; and we need not throw up our hands and affect to be shocked at the facility with which the conversion was effected. Jean-Jacques was only sixteen. A boy of that age is rarely a theologian, and naturally prefers the religion of people who are kind to him to that of people who chastise him.

"God calls you," said M. de Pontverre. "Go to Annecy. You will there find a very charitable lady who is in a position, thanks to the benefactions of the King, to assist other souls in their escape from the errors from which she has herself withdrawn."

He did not want to go, he tells us. His pride was wounded—a boy's pride naturally would be wounded—by the suggestion that he needed charity. He supposed—boys generally do suppose—that a pious woman must necessarily be a prim and unattractive woman; and he expected that she would lecture him, patronise him, and make him feel uncomfortable. But, on the other hand, the thought

of the journey—a journey with a definite goal and fraught with mysterious possibilities—appealed to his flowering imagination. He allowed himself to be overpersuaded, and he started; and three days later he presented himself with a letter of introduction to Madame de Warens.

His association with Madame de Warens was to be the dominating influence of the next twelve years of his life. We must pause, and turn back, and trace her career, and try to see her not as she appears in the idealised picture which Jean-Jacques drew but as the recent researches of the antiquaries of Vaud and Geneva and Savoy show her really to have been.

CHAPTER III

The legendary Madame de Warens—The story of her conversion as told by Père Boudet—The real Madame de Warens—Her family—Her schooldays at Lausanne—Her marriage—Her alleged lovers—Bored by the monotony of life at Vevey, she starts a stocking factory—Failure of the business—Bankruptcy in sight—Creditors clamorous—Madame de Warens decides to run away.

THE world knows Madame de Warens from the *Confessions*. Rousseau's biographers, up to and including Lord Morley, have accepted the portrait drawn and the story related in that work. It would have been strange if they had not done so, as they had no other more trustworthy authority to lean upon. What the *Confessions* give us, however, is merely a vainglorious and habitually inaccurate man's report of the statements of a vainglorious and habitually inaccurate woman—a narrative of facts twice embellished in the crucibles of two luxuriant imaginations. The margin for inexactitude is obvious and wide.

An alternative version of the story—of the earlier part of it, at all events—may be found in Père Boudet's Life of Roussilion de Bernex, Bishop of Annecy, who received Madame de Warens into the Catholic Church; but there are two reasons why it cannot be trusted. In the first place, the author's cue was to exaggerate the importance of the convert in order to

make good the Bishop's claims to beatification. In the second place, he had no personal knowledge of Madame de Warens, but derived all his information from a memorandum which Jean Jacques supplied. Consequently, he repeats Jean-Jacques' mistakes instead of correcting them; and it is only through the recent researches of such students as MM. Metzger,[1] Ritter, Mugnier, and de Montet, who have pursued their quarry through all the archives of Savoy and Vaud, that it is possible to destroy the legend and re-establish the truth. Let us take the legend first.

Madame de Warens, according to Jean-Jacques, was a member of "the noble and ancient family of La Tour de Peilz"; but she had, as a matter of fact, no connection whatever with that house. Her husband, according to Boudet, was the Baron de Warens, and she herself certainly assumed the title of Baroness while living in Savoy; but she had no warrant for doing so. M. de Warens, a country gentleman, formerly a soldier of fortune in the Swedish service, held no title of nobility whatsoever. Jean-Jacques credits her with two lovers in the Canton of Vaud—one of them a professor of philosophy and the other a minister of religion; but no contemporary reference to either liaison can be discovered, and the alleged hero of the latter intrigue did not even come to live in Vevey until after the time to which it is attributed. Evidently Jean-Jacques was here repeating the idlest of idle gossip.

Nor do we find ourselves any more firmly established upon the ground of solid fact when we turn to Boudet's circumstantial story of the flight and the

[1] See *La Conversion de Mme de Warens.*

conversion, though it is a fine, dramatic story and must on no account be left untold.

The change of heart was brought about, according to Father Boudet, because Madame de Warens was fond of reading. As a matter of fact, the only book which we know her to have taken with her when she left her home was the Dictionary of Bayle—that sceptical forerunner of Voltaire; but let that pass, and let Father Boudet speak:—

"She was particularly attracted by books treating of religion" (he writes). "She soon found reason to suspect the falsity of the Protestant religion in which she had been born; and, at the same time, she perceived at a glance that there could be no assurance of salvation for her except in the communion of the Church of Rome."

In this frame of mind, we are told, Madame de Warens crossed the lake to Evian, to take the waters for the benefit of her health—a frequent practice with the Swiss of Lausanne and Vevey. The King was there, with his Court, and so was the Bishop. The latter preached, and Madame de Warens went to hear him. He "purposely dealt with controversial subjects, knowing that there were a good many Protestants in the congregation"; and the result was that Madame de Warens clutched at the prelate's cassock, and threw herself upon her knees, exclaiming, with tears in her eyes, "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum." He raised her, drew her apart, and conversed with her for a few minutes, while the King and the Court looked on.

What followed, according to our biographer, was not less dramatic and astounding. It was arranged, we read, that Madame de Warens should return to Vevey to fetch her property and bid her friends farewell before being formally received into the bosom of the Church; but that project had to be abandoned. The Swiss had got wind of what was happening. It would not have been safe for Madame de Warens to revisit Vaud. It was not even safe for her to remain at Evian. A plot had been formed to kidnap her and carry her off. No violence was to be spared in the process. Evian was, if necessary, to be sacked and burnt. So rumour ran; and, in order that it might not be realised, Madame de Warens was hastily whisked away. She was placed in a carriage, escorted by forty soldiers of the King's bodyguard, and driven to the Convent of the Visitation at Annecy, where the Bishop, who followed her, preached a triumphant sermon, so moving in its eloquence that "the nuns could not restrain their tears on hearing the detailed story which the prelate told them, while they applauded his well-deserved eulogy of Madame de Warens' ready response to the inspirations of grace." Her abjuration of error was, it is true, to be rewarded with a pension; but Father Boudet adds:—

"This fact, though it is a dazzling proof of the piety and generosity of the monarch, by no means diminishes the merit which Madame de Warens displayed in abandoning great possessions and a brilliant position in her own country, in order to follow the Lord in a foreign land."

That is the story as it figures in the pages of

writers who have sought to make it as effect
possible in order that it might redound to the
glory alike of its heroine and of the Roman C
Part of it is true; but while some of the fact
tained in it have been embellished, others n
essential have been left out. We must turn ba
try to reconstruct it from more authentic eviden

Madame de Warens was certainly *née* de la
though not de la Tour de Peilz. Her family
traced back to the fourteenth century, and had
land at Chailly, near Vevey, for a good many g
tions. It was there that Françoise-Louise
Tour, afterwards Madame de Warens, was b
1699. Her mother died about a year later, a
father soon afterwards married again. Sh
chiefly brought up by her aunts, Louise and Vi
maiden ladies living in the country, at Les B
near Montreux. They were Pietists, and
friends of Magny, the local leader and pr
of the sect—a circumstance determining the
of her early religious associations, and importa
be true, as it is said to be, that Pietists pass
easily than Calvinists from the Protestant
Catholic fold.

After the death of M. de la Tour, his dau
guardians sent her to Madame Crespin's boa
school at Lausanne. Madame Crespin's bills,
are still in existence, show that her pupil rece
liberal education, including "accomplishments"
while she was still a schoolgirl—only fourteen
of age, in fact—she received an offer of ma
in circumstances of which we find a curious rec

a statement of claim delivered in a subsequent lawsuit between her husband and his father :—

"In the beginning of 1713" (says this legal document), "M. de Villardin gave his son M. de Loys to understand that he wished him to seek the hand of Mlle de la Tour. M. de Loys had no particular wish to change his condition, but he regarded this request as a command, and made the acquaintance of the young lady, whom he had never previously seen. Then, falling passionately in love with her, he quickly made up his mind, with the result that M. de Villardin went to la Tour de Peilz to seek the consent of her guardians to the match."

This M. de Loys is the same as M. de Warens, the name by which he is best known being derived from a property which his father subsequently assigned to him. He was thirty-five years of age, had fought for the Swedes against the Russians, and then held the rank of captain in the forces of their Excellencies of Berne.[1] He seems to have been an ordinary well-meaning man, who would have made a very good husband to an ordinary well-meaning woman, rather weak, and of decidedly unromantic character. So far as social position went, he was eligible enough. The objections raised by the guardians were overcome, and the wedding took place on September 22, 1713, the bride bringing her husband a fortune of about 30,000 florins.

Their married life lasted for nearly thirteen years.

[1] Vaud had been conquered from Savoy by Bernese in 1536 and was at this date governed by Berne as a subject country.

They first lived at Vevey; then they moved to Lausanne; then they returned to Vevey. In both towns M. de Warens held municipal offices of sufficient importance to prove to us that he enjoyed the esteem of his fellow-citizens; his wife at the same time was a personage in society. But she had no children, and needed distraction.

Jean-Jacques says, as we have seen, that she sought distraction in intrigue; and he names her alleged lovers: M. de Tavel, a Bernese colonel,[1] and Pastor Perret, twenty-five years older than she and the father of a large family. To the reasons already given for scepticism as to these reports may be added the certain fact that no rumour of the kind ever reached her husband's ears. Though he ultimately divorced her, as we shall see, he did so on the ground not of infidelity but of desertion. We have it in his handwriting, in a confidential letter addressed to members of his own family, that up to the date of her disappearance "there had been no cloud to trouble the happiness of the union." His complaints were that she was vain and frivolous, too much of a Pietist, and too little a woman of business.

Pietism and frivolity are not very compatible attributes; and, as a matter of fact, our most solid testimony to the frivolity of Madame de Warens is found in a rebuke which Magny the Pietist addressed to her on the subject. Her answer admits the charge while offering excuses and pleading extenuating circumstances. She has social duties, she says,

[1] He had previously been a captain in the Swiss Guards in the service of the King of France.

imposed by her distinguished position in life; she must necessarily "do the honours" of the establishment which her position obliges her to maintain. "But," she adds, "I have never tried to cut a dash, or given myself airs"; and she concludes by reminding her philosopher that "in the ordinary course of nature we have but a brief while in which to enjoy the objects to which we are attached." The inference seems fair that she was quite alive to the attractions of things transitory and took her pleasures with a zest which shocked the severe.

It is not less clear, however, that presently these pleasures palled upon her. The possibilities of frivolous enjoyment are always limited in Switzerland; they must have been very limited indeed at Vevey at a time when the Consistory kept its jealous eye upon the amusements of the inhabitants and called them to account if they gave a dance or played a game of cards. Madame de Warens trod the dull round of provincial relaxation with a restless mind, coming to feel more and more the need of an escape from the monotony of life. She was neither a specially good woman nor a specially bad woman; but she had no child and no sustained intellectual interests, and she was bored by the continual vacancy of her days. Some women in such cases take to love, some to drink, some to religion. Madame de Warens, exceptionally, sought distraction in business.

There came to Vevey in 1724 a certain Elie Laffon, a brother of one of the governesses at Madame Crespin's boarding-school. He proposed to start the manufacture of silk stockings in the town. The Town Council gave him the necessary

authorisation, but his capital was insufficient, a
wanted a partner. His sister gave him an
duction to Madame de Warens. He called o
and persuaded her to associate herself with
in the enterprise. She did not even consu
husband on the subject, but signed agreemen
her own responsibility. The business was
hers, conducted for her benefit and at her
Laffon was to draw a fixed salary and t
percentage of the profits. M. de Warens
proved, but accepted the accomplished fact.
would not lend his name to the undertakin
he lent his money, even going so far as to b
from the Town and from the Hospital fo
purpose.

If the industry had succeeded, the whole cou
this biography would have been different. M.
de Warens would have attained honoured age
own land. Jean-Jacques would never have know
and been helped by her, and perhaps—— Bu
is an idle speculation. The industry not only
in the end but never began to succeed. The
goings of the manufacturers exceeded their inco
from the first. M. de Warens had to be aske
more money, and then again for more. In orde
the business might not be starved, personal exp
had to be reduced. M. and Madame de Waren
adopted two children—a boy and a girl; and
they could not afford to maintain them. Th
was sent home to her mother; the boy was p
in the charge of a charitable institution.

These sacrifices, however, did not avail to
the tide; and matters went no better when I

withdrew from the business and was replaced by a French refugee named Saint-André. A further appeal for help had to be addressed to M. de Warens, who borrowed 800 livres and came yet again to the rescue. He was annoyed, but does not seem, even then, to have suspected the desperate condition of affairs. That, and no secret intrigue subsequently discovered, is the explanation of his complaint of his wife's "deceitfulness." He says outright that she was "a liar," and we may believe him. No doubt she wheedled him; and it may be surmised that he did not push his inquiries very far, wishing instinctively to postpone the day on which the disagreeable truth must be faced.

Matters, however, were coming—and indeed had come—to a very desperate pass indeed. Trade was at a standstill; creditors were clamorous; bankruptcy was in sight. Madame de Warens had to choose her course—and choose it quickly.

She might, of course, and ought to have confessed, and appealed to her husband to stand by her while she liquidated her assets and wound up her business. But she was afraid to face him, and ashamed to face the world. M. de Warens was old enough to be her father. He had let her have her own way, weakly though discontentedly and grumblingly, as the elderly husbands of young wives are apt to do. But, though he had made concessions, and even made them generously, real sympathy between him and his wife was lacking. Though he had been weak, he was also cold and anxious to be stern—a man who attached a great deal of importance to money and was very reluctant to part with it. He would be

angry; and it would be the harder to tell him
truth now because he had been deceived in the
Moreover, there were the neighbours. Ma
de Warens had moved among them as a pers
fashion and consideration, already well-to-do
expecting soon to be rich. It would be paint
lift the veil and expose herself to curious
malicious eyes as the unsuccessful trader, the
rupt adventuress, reduced to a restricted life of
economies. People would laugh, and sneer, and
and that would be unbearable. What, then, to
And how to solve the situation?

There remained one course open, and one
sudden flight and disappearance, to begin a new
in a new country—a new country from which she
separated not by an ocean but only by a lake.

It would not be necessary to go empty-han
She could depart spoiling the Egyptians, like
Israelites of old. There was the stock-in-tr
there was the cash-box. There were her jewels
her dresses; there were the books in the library,
there was the plate and linen. Her creditors w
seize all these possessions if she stayed; but
could defeat them by taking the goods away
her across the frontier. Her husband was on
the creditors, but he must take his chance with
rest.

No doubt it was a disgraceful thing to do;
yet there was a means by which disgrace migh
avoided. She had only to change her religion
figure as a fugitive for conscience' sake. The w
of the defrauded creditors would then be drowne
the louder uproar of theological indignation; and

woman who had fled from the bailiffs would be held up to the admiration of the world by Catholic apologists as one who had abandoned "great possessions and a brilliant position in her own country in order to follow the Lord in a foreign land."

She thought matters over carefully, and resolved upon that *coup d'éclat*.

CHAPTER IV

M. de Warens' account of his wife's flight—The coup prepared long beforehand—Madame de Warens arranges to come to the lake to take the waters—She takes the plate and leaves with her without her husband's knowledge—He visits her at Evian and notes suspicious circumstances—Returning to Vevey, he hears that she has fled under the King of Sardinia's escort—Opening the cupboards, he discovers that the valuables are missing—He goes to Annecy and makes an arrangement with his wife to dish her creditors for his advantage—He seeks and obtains a divorce

We have a full, and apparently faithful, account of Madame de Warens' *coup d'éclat* in a letter written by her husband to his brother-in-law, M. de Mulder, about six years after the event. It was first printed at length by the Société d'histoire de la Suisse Romande, though extracts from it had previously been published in the *Revue Suisse*. When Lord Morley wrote, it had not yet been discovered, and it adds many interesting and picturesque particulars to the narratives of Jean-Jacques and Father Boudet.

The resolution to depart, we gather, was not taken suddenly; but Madame de Warens' inclinations towards the Catholic faith grew *pari passu* with the failure of her industrial prospects. The seeds of heresy were sown when she took a "cure" at Aix-les-Bains in the autumn of 1725. On her way home

n that watering place she stayed with some friends Geneva, and "could not resist the temptation to them how charmed she was with Savoy, and how nted with her own country." This, on the face t, means, of course, not that she thought the gion there more convincing but that she found the rty more agreeable, but that fact does not impair argument, for Madame de Warens' motives, as have already seen, were mixed.

Soon after her return she dropped another hint. de Warens' uncle came to visit him in the course he winter, and "she told him, in so many words, before the following summer was over he would of an extraordinary event happening to a lady he country." This was, M. de Warens considered, roof that she prepared her *coup* long beforehand"; he proceeds to tell us how she prepared it —

"She took the precaution, in the spring of 1726, nd for M. Viridet, a doctor at Morges, with the ress purpose of inducing him to advise her to the waters—a remedy which is a saddle to fit horses. M. Viridet, who knew that her ailments more imaginary than real, perceiving that she made up her mind to take the waters of hion,[1] did not oppose her wishes. Provided this pretext, she was able to make all her ngements for the execution of her project."

The spring passed and the summer came, ame de Warens borrowed "considerable sums" he security of the stock which it was her purpose

[1] A small watering place close to Evian.

fraudulently to remove out of the reach of the lenders; and then she proceeded to pack. It was her custom, whenever she travelled, to take a great deal of luggage with her, so that the vast number of her packages failed to excite suspicion. Moreover, the maid who helped her to pack was a proselyte and was in the plot; and M. de Warens himself had important public engagements which distracted his attention from her proceedings.

There had been a flood at Vevey, and much damage had been done. Inspectors had been sent from Berne, and M. de Warens had to show them round. This prevented him from accompanying his wife on her journey as he had intended, and enabled her to keep her elaborate preparations secret from him. All that he had time to do was to ask her to lock up the plate, leaving out only a few common utensils for his use during her absence. He saw the plate locked up, but he did not see what happened afterwards. He was at supper with the visitors from Berne while the boxes were being conveyed to the boat, so that he had no opportunity of counting them; and though he went down to the quay in his dressing-gown to see his wife off at two o'clock in the morning, it was naturally too dark for him to notice any suspicious circumstance. Probably, too, he was cold and in a hurry to get back to bed.

That was about the middle of July. Early in August M. de Warens, being more at leisure, went over to Evian to pay his wife a visit. She had already abjured, or promised to abjure, the Protestant faith. She had already thrown herself at the feet of the King of Savoy, appealing for "protection and

bread", and the King had told her that he accorded her the former, and would see to it that she never wanted for the latter. But M. de Warens knew nothing of that, and had no forebodings. A woman warned him. "Whatever you do, don't leave your wife," she said to him three times in the course of the afternoon, but he only interpreted this advice as an exhortation to be more attentive and polite. Nor did he find anything equivocal in his wife's request to him that he would send her certain treasures which she had left behind. Bayle's Dictionary, in several volumes, "the reading of which amused her," and a certain costly gold-headed cane "which she wanted to walk with when taking the waters." He promised, and he kept his promise. Madame de Warens went down to the water-side to see the last of him.

"We set off, and her eyes were long fixed on the departing boat. But of what dissimulation is not a woman capable? Long afterwards I heard on good authority that hardly had she turned her back than her maid said to her, 'Madame, you have a good husband.' 'If you think so,' she answered, 'take him, for he will soon be without a wife.'"

That was on the evening of August the 4th. On the morning of the 5th M. de Warens, still suspecting nothing, sent Saint-André to Evian with the dictionary and the walking-stick. The man of business discharged his errand, and was back again on the morning of the 6th, with an order that a bale of merchandise from the factory should be sent off to

Evian the same afternoon. This seemed pe
but of course it was quite possible that Mada
Warens had found a customer for her silk sto
in Savoy. The merchandise was therefore
patched, and Saint André went off to Lau
The letter continues :—

"I do not remember for certain whet
started the same night or the following m
What I do know for certain is that, on the e
of Wednesday the 7th of August, he came bac
Lausanne, and accosted me from behind, as
walking on the Aile, saying, 'Sir, you no
have a wife.' 'What do you mean?' I asked
astonishment. 'She left Evian this morni
follow the King to Turin,' he replied. 'A
quite sure of that?' I asked. 'It is the
talk of Lausanne,' he answered. But I was s
that I could not believe a word of it."

Confirmation of the rumour, however,
followed :—

"On the morning of August the 8th, a La
man whose name I have forgotten, and who h
arrived from Evian, came to see me and told
it was only too true that the said lady had
the previous day—that she had traversed the
town on foot, escorted by two gentlemen
Majesty's suite; that, at the gate of Alling
had got into a carriage with a young lad
Evian whom I have since seen in her comp
Annecy; and that the carriage was escorted b
soldiers of the royal bodyguard."

And then there came other messengers :—

"Between one and two in the afternoon two boatmen coming from Evian told me that they had met Saint-André, and that he had sent them on to me. 'This morning,' they said, 'we heard the King as he came out from mass give orders to M. Bugnet to see that Madame de Warens' belongings were sent off. We saw the bales and boxes embarked for Geneva. They were all under the protection of the royal seal and arms.'"

"On hearing that," proceeds M. de Warens, "I swallowed a basin of soup"; and no doubt he needed all the strength that a basin of soup could give him. Shock had followed upon shock; and he already knew what property—and whose property—the boxes and bales contained. The very first rumour of his wife's departure had set him looking for the key of the plate cupboard. After a long search he had found it—rolled up in cotton-wool and stuffed away in an old tea-caddy. He had rushed to the cupboard and unlocked it, and found—nothing. The cupboard was bare, and so was the wardrobe which he next examined. Madame de Warens had not only removed the cash-box and her jewellery and personal effects; she had stripped the house of all its valuables. Bayle's Dictionary and the gold-headed cane had only been wanted in order to make the collection complete.

An inventory of the goods removed was drawn up and has been preserved. It includes three complete coffee services; an immense number of silver spoons

and forks; sugar basins, salt cellars, candlesticks, mustard pots, and pepper pots; a pair of gold buttons, a gold watch, and two silver snuff boxes, a collection of Japanese porcelain; all Madame de Warens' dresses and all her dress materials; a bed, a quantity of bed and table linen, the best books in the library, and all the tapestry chair covers. All these things were gone, and their total value was close upon ten thousand florins. Many of the items had not been paid for, and the tradesmen would indubitably look to M. de Warens for payment.

Sustained by his soup, he mounted his horse and galloped to Geneva. The boxes would have to pass through Geneva on their way to Annecy, and perhaps he could intercept them. But it seemed not. The persons whom he consulted on the matter "men of honour"—held out no encouragement; and therefore:—

"On their assuring me that my request could not be granted because the goods passed under the name and protection of the King, I pressed the point no further and went home. And I think I acted wisely. In any event, I should have missed the principal object of my quest—which was the cash box; for the lady had been very careful to take that in the carriage with her."

That ought to be the end of the story, but it is not. Letters began to arrive from Annecy, pressing M. de Warens to visit his wife there. He was much too angry to wish to see her, and her first letters were left unanswered. But there was the monetary tangle to be cleared up. Though Madame de

Warens had carried all her portable property away, she had left other property less portable behind. By law the property of all persons who changed their religion was forfeited to the State; but the State did not always enforce its rights. M. de Warens stood well with the authorities, and had reason to hope that an exception might be made in his favour. The creditors, however, had a prior claim, so that this indulgence in itself would be of little use to him. The question was: Would Madame de Warens assign the property to him by deed of gift, and so help him to dish the creditors? It was to try to persuade her to do that, and not for any sentimental reasons, that at last, towards the end of September, he set out to see her.

He found her in bed in the convent, and "began," he says, "with religion," pointing out to his wife that the faith which she had abandoned was "the one that conformed most nearly to the purity of the primitive church," and that the church which she had joined was "disfigured by customs and ceremonies borrowed from paganism," and adhered to dogmas "full of absurdities, fables, and gross errors." He added that she "might deceive man but could not deceive God," et cetera, et cetera.

It was not very conciliatory, but Madame de Warens did not appear perturbed. She invoked no "conscientious motives" but admitted that she had acted under the influence of "pecuniary embarrassment." But why, she asked, treat the matter so seriously? She had always understood that her husband was "tolerant in religious matters." The simple course, then, would be for him to change his

religion too. If he did, he "would not be forgotten" but a "place" would be found for him which would amply compensate him for the position which he abandoned in his own country.

Naturally M. de Warens would have nothing to say to this proposal, but he remembered that he had come not to talk religion but to talk business, and he changed the subject. He explained the legal bearings of the situation, and inquired, Would Madame de Warens, or would she not, assist him to dish the creditors by means of the proposed deed of gift? She replied that she must consult her religious advisers, and she withdrew for the purpose. The opinion of the religious was entirely favourable to dishonest courses. It was agreed that the deed should be signed on condition that M. de Warens promised to make his wife an allowance; and, though there were subsequent charges of bad faith resulting in litigation, the dreary details of the lawsuit need not occupy these pages.

M. de Warens had done his business and could retire. More than one attempt was made to convert him before he went, but his convictions were proof against the most insidious assaults. "Do you really think," asked an abbess, "that your wife is damned?" "Madam, my religion teaches me to judge no one," was the reply. An abbé who unmasked controversial batteries was curtly invited not to waste his time. A suggestion that a change of heart might be rewarded by a lucrative position in the royal service was met with the retort that, as M. de Warens had only one soul to lose, he could not afford to gamble with it. Ultimately, having sat up with his wife in the

convent until one o'clock in the morning, with the result that she was censured by the Lady Superior on the following day, he left her, convinced that she was "a veritable comedian"; and soon afterwards he received a letter from her, couched in these terms:—

"I must beg you to regard me henceforward as dead, and to think of me as if I really were so."

He had got what he wanted; so he accepted the situation and sought and obtained a divorce on the ground of "malicious desertion and abjuration of the Protestant religion." For some time his pecuniary circumstances were straitened. He went abroad to seek employment, and can be traced to Holland, where he was tutor to the young Prince of Anhalt, and to Islington, where he lived in humble circumstances. Pressed by his friends to return, he settled in Lausanne in 1734, and spent his later years as a member of the Town Council and a municipal functionary. He was free to marry again if he chose, but his one experience of matrimony sufficed. The archives of his family still preserve the manuscript of some doggerel verses in which he says as much. Rendered into doggerel English, they run thus:—

"No longer constant in my loves I'll be;[1]
Henceforth flirtation is the thing for me.

[1] "Non, je ne serai plus constant dans mes amours,
Et je fais vœux de badiner toujours.
Plutôt que de languir dans un cruel empire
Vaut-il pas mieux de jour en jour changer?
En liberté à présent je respire,
Et je mourrai plutôt que de me rengager."

Rather than pine beneath one cruel sway
'Twere well to change allegiance every day.
At present I am breathing freedom's breath,
Ere I become a slave I'll welcome death."

Death came to him, eighteen years after the date of this composition,[1] at the age of sixty-six; but his further fortunes have no connection with this story, in which, indeed, he has only figured by accident—because he has told a tale which bears the stamp of truth, and so explodes the legend perpetuated in the *Confessions* and the writings of Catholic priests.

He does not strike one, it must be admitted, as a sympathetic character. One finds something characteristically Swiss in his lack of elasticity and imagination. Assuredly he was the last man in the world who was fit to marry a child-wife. He had neither the ardour that becomes a lover nor the authority of a man who knows how to be master in his own house. At first he was too easy-going; then he was too hard; finally he was too fond of money, and rather less honest than one could wish. His only admirable trait—if any one wishes to admire him—was his easily shocked Protestantism and his uncompromising refusal to gamble with the only soul he had; and it may be questioned whether he was going the right way to save that soul when he conspired with his wife to dish her creditors for his advantage.

To say that, however, is to say quite enough on a subject not immediately before us. Our business is not with M. de Warens but with his wife—and with her only because, living at Annecy in the bloom of her youth, in a house well stocked with plate and

linen and crockery for which she had not paid, she showed hospitality—a more than ordinary and not at all conventional hospitality—to the runaway apprentice from Geneva introduced to her by M. de Pontverre.

CHAPTER V

Arrival of Jean-Jacques at Annecy—He is dispatched to the Hospice of the Catechumens at Turin—His father's abortive pursuit—Life in the hospital—The quest of fortune at Turin—The kindness of Madame Basile—The unkindness of her husband—Jean Jacques as a valet—The story of the stolen ribbon—Decision to return to Madame de Warens.

M. de WARENS, as we have seen, did not believe in the sincerity of his wife's conversion; for him she was "a veritable comedian." Jean-Jacques, on the other hand, says that she never regretted her change of religion, and would even have been content to continue to live in the convent if it had not been for the "cackling" of the nuns. It is hardly for a male writer not of the Catholic persuasion to estimate the force of that objection to nunneries; but we have a third and more trustworthy witness to Madame de Warens' theological position in M. de Conzié, who knew her well in her later years, and after her death wrote a short appreciation of her[1] in the form of a letter addressed to the Comte de Mellarède. He conversed with her one day on the subject, and she said:—

"Will you believe me, my dear friend, when I tell you that, for about two years after my abjuration

[1] "Notice sur Madame de Warens," published in vol. i. of the *Mémoires et Documents* of the "Société savoisienne d'histoire et d'archéologie."

of Protestantism, I never went to bed at night without a sensation of goose-flesh, due to the reflections caused by my change of religion, and my abandonment of the prejudices of my education and of the creed of my fathers. This long uncertainty was terrible for me, seeing that I had always believed in an eternity of either happiness or torment. My indecision and my doubts tormented me for ever so long."

This, it is clear, is not the voice of a proselyte who has quitted the darkness of error in obedience to the voice of the Lord, but of a hesitating pervert who settles down to a new religion with qualms of conscience. In the end, we may take it, the Catholic habit became second nature; but in the meantime—and even until the end—Madame de Warens' career gave many proofs that she preferred an active to a contemplative life. We have already observed her in the rôle of manufacturer; we shall have to trace her course presently as a diplomatist and as a company promoter; for the moment we are concerned with her only as the benefactress of Jean-Jacques.

She was twenty-nine, a handsome woman though of no dazzling beauty, a person of some consideration in Annecy society. He was a lad of sixteen, unformed, though not unattractive, of a station in life decidedly inferior to hers. Looking back upon the event in after life, he declared that he would have liked to enclose with a gold railing the fortunate spot of earth on which he handed her M. de Pontverre's letter; but that was a sentimental afterthought belonging to the years when she was dead and he had lost his illusions. Their relations, when they

first met, can have had no touch of sentiment, but must have been determined by their respective ages and positions in life. Madame de Warens was kind, and Jean-Jacques was grateful – his gratitude chiefly taking the form of a lively sense of favours to come. She gave him bed and board for a night or two, while the priests were arranging for his dispatch to Turin, there to be received into the Hospice of the Catechumens and taught to abjure the Genevan heresy; and then :—

"Poor little fellow!" (she said). "You must go where God calls you; but when you are grown up, you will remember me."

He would indeed. He would remember her when he had need of her—but not before. When he had ceased to have need of her—but not before—he would forget her, doing little for her when she had need of him, and only recalling her memory at the last as a sort of sentimental exercise. But this is to anticipate. Our business now is with Jean-Jacques setting out upon his travels.

His journey easily might have been, and very nearly was, arrested at the outset. Madame de Warens, he thinks, would have sent him back to his father if she had dared so far to brave Catholic opinion; and his father had heard where he had gone, and was in pursuit. Getting on his track at Annecy, and being mounted, whereas Jean-Jacques was on foot, and in no particular hurry, he could easily have caught him at Chambéry; but he weighed the pros and cons and decided to give up the chase. It was

Madame de Warens

Effigies e monumento in templo Mariæ de Chevy

true that, if he failed to bring home the apprentice who had broken his articles, he would have to pay twenty-five crowns damages to Ducommun; but, on the other hand, as long as his son stayed away from home, he would be free to draw and spend the interest accruing on the property which Jean-Jacques had inherited from his mother. There is no evidence that he balanced any other considerations than these; and the result of his reflections was that he cut his loss and grasped his profit, leaving Jean-Jacques free to pass unmolested over the Alps to Italy.

The walk produced no incidents on which we need dwell. The circumstances of the sojourn in the Hospital of the Catechumens are hardly more important. Certainly we need attach no significance to the theological hesitations and scruples of which the *Confessions* speak. Jean-Jacques was too old to think, as a matter of course, as he was told; he was too young to take the philosophic or cynical view that all religions are equally true, or equally false, or equally useful. He was bound to be converted in the end at the Hospital, for that was what he was there for; but he owed it to his dignity to argue and not be converted too easily. It would have been the same with almost any boy of his age even if his spiritual guides had only been trying to transform him from, say, a General to a Particular Baptist. So let his casuistries pass. The interest of the experience is as the beginning of disillusion—the first awakening of the wanderer to the hard realities of life.

Jean-Jacques had set forth, conquering and to conquer, rejoicing in the glory and the dream of youth. Having been told to go, he went without

anxiety, holding his advisers responsible for his welfare, believing that the Lord—or, if not the Lord, the patrons—would provide. The Hospice of the Catechumens, as he pictured it, was to be the portal of a romantic and glorious career. He had only to let himself be beaten in argument by the monks, and the monks, having confuted him in debate, would place his feet on the ladder of ambition and show him how to climb it. So he had fancied; but experience put his fancies to confusion.

The Hospice of the Catechumens was an uncomfortable and unpleasant place in which religion appeared in its least romantic aspects. The company of converts was mainly composed of blackguards and prostitutes who spent their lives in wandering from one such establishment to another, entering as heretics and leaving as communicants, repeating the process indefinitely, selling their souls over and over again, and in the intervals living riotously on the proceeds of the sale. So long as they abjured, no further questions were asked, and nobody cared what became of them. Nobody cared what became of Jean-Jacques himself. A sum of money—a very small sum of money—was collected for him, but that was all. On the day on which he was received into the Church he was turned out of the Hospice.

"They recommended me" (he says) "to live as a good Christian, and to be faithful to the grace bestowed upon me. Then they wished me good luck, and shut the door on me, and all was over."

He was on the streets of a strange city with

twenty francs in his pocket. He had no trade, no friends, no introductions, no habits of industry, and no taste for laborious occupations. On the other hand, he was a dreamer—not one whose dreams are a prelude to strenuous action, but one for whom the living present is invested with hallucinations, and who is content to live in it, waiting upon the chapter of accidents and the good fairy with the magic wand. Life is extremely interesting to the young who are able to face it in that spirit. It appears to them not as an uphill fight, but as a sequence of disconnected surprises, like the successive instalments of a serial story. The story, perhaps, seldom ends happily, and there almost always comes a time when the interest of it flags; but the beginnings have all the fascination of romance.

It was pretty much in that spirit that Jean-Jacques accepted his independence at Turin. There were sights to be seen, and he had twenty francs in his pocket. Why then take thought for the morrow? There was no more need to do that than there is to trouble about an instalment of a serial story before it appears —before, perhaps, it has been conceived in the brain of the serialist. If Jean-Jacques did not consciously argue like that, at least he acted as if he did, spending his twenty francs before facing any of the practical problems of existence. When his needs at last drove him to face them, fortune favoured him, if not as romantically as she favours the heroes of *roman-feuilleton*, at least as readily and as opportunely.

In the absence of solid worth, he must be assumed to have succeeded by means of an engaging manner. It is true that he was not a gentleman, and never,

even when he rose in life, acquired a gentleman's calm, or dignity, or reticence, or *savoir vivre*; we shall, as we proceed, find plenty of evidence of that. But he was always strangely successful, in a sense and up to a point, with two classes of the community—with women and with priests. Presumably a strain of femininity in his character is the explanation. There are women who are attracted by weakness in a man because it gives them the illusion that they themselves are strong; and certainly Jean-Jacques, throughout his life, encouraged this inversion of the normal relation of the sexes. It became as natural for him, in the course of time, to depend on women as it usually is for women to depend on men; and he met many women to whom that sort of thing appealed. His shyness, awkwardness, and timidity were assets, though he did not know it. Women—and also priests—were disposed to caress him and be kind to him in the spirit in which they caress and are kind to stray cats. It was very much in the style of a stray cat looking out for a new home that he sought the acquaintance and hospitality of Madame Basile.

She kept a shop; he saw her through the shop window and thought that she looked kind. He approached her with a timid proposal to engrave her crest or her initials on her coffee-pot; she took pity on him and listened to his story, and gave him food, just in the spirit in which she would have given a stray cat a saucer of milk; then she encouraged him to flirt with her. A young married woman, especially if she be silly, is often tempted to show just that sort of kindness to a good-looking, nicely mannered boy. It is a way of playing with fire without grave danger

of being burnt—a mild indiscretion entailing no awkward consequences. So with Madame Basile.

Jean-Jacques, though he obtained no higher privilege than that of kissing her hand, claims that he tasted "the purest pleasures of love" while kneeling at her feet; and no doubt he did feel extremely sentimental. Sentiment plays a larger part than passion in the amours of a boy of sixteen; it is the age of imagination and of *naïveté*. The married woman who means to remain virtuous while letting her fancy run riot feels safe with such a lover. Very likely Madame Basile was quite safe with Jean-Jacques. But she had a clerk, and she also had a husband. The clerk told the husband what was happening, and the husband instructed the clerk to put the intruder outside the door. He did so "with every possible cruelty and insult"; and that was the end of episode number one.

Still Jean-Jacques had not kissed Madame Basile's hand for nothing. She had given him "a new hat and a change of linen." These additions to his wardrobe made his appearance presentable, and enabled his landlady, whom he had also attracted, to procure him a situation in the domestic service of Madame de Vercellis. That lady was dying of cancer, so that there could be no question of flirtation there; but there were other possibilities. Why should not the new valet be remembered in his mistress's will? Jean-Jacques admits that he cherished the expectation, and complains bitterly that it was frustrated by designing rivals. The steward and his wife and his niece "conspired to exclude me from her presence." So Madame de Vercellis died and Jean-Jacques got

nothing, though he protests that he had e
something by shedding "sincere tears" over
sufferings.

And yet he had got something. The Com
la Roque, Madame de Vercellis' nephew and
had given him thirty livres, and he had stolen a
of ribbon. He not only stole it, but, when ch
with the theft, lied and threw the blame on one
maid-servants.

That, at all events, is the story which he
himself, with intense and apparently sincere re
His self-reproaches are so bitter that a biogr
can add nothing to them, and can only hope
the facts have been distorted in the mirr
a diseased memory. Jean-Jacques, as has
said, had Bunyan's morbid tendency to exagg
some of his depravities; and this may be a ca
point. A great nobleman can hardly, in any
have made so much fuss as he represents ab
piece of ribbon; and though no doubt his
science was properly pricked by the recollecti
some infidelity to the code of honour of the ser
hall, it would be wrong of us to let our impressi
him be too much coloured by an anecdote in
there seems so much reason to suspect a superstr
of hallucination. Jean-Jacques was young, a
lackey, and had some of the vices of the la
estate, which afterwards preyed upon his
It does not seem fair to say anything more
that.

He remained a lackey, however, for a little l
Having read on one page of the *Confessions* th
Comte de Roque had dismissed both him an

maid-servant because he could not determine which of them had stolen the ribbon, we read, a few pages farther on, that the same Comte de Roque sent for him, thanked him for his devoted services to Madame de Vercellis, and informed him that he had found him a new place. This is in itself sufficient evidence that the ribbon story, whatever may be the rights of it, had no such importance as is attached to it in the *Confessions*. Were it otherwise, the alleged inconsistency of the patron's conduct would be too glaring to be credible. Evidently neither he nor Jean-Jacques attached any importance to it at the time; so that we are warranted in ignoring it and passing on to follow the lackey's fortunes in the service of the Comte de Gouvon, equerry of the Queen of Savoy.

He waited at table, and one day surprised the company by joining in the conversation to clear up a point in philology. It was a hazardous step for a servant to take in order to demonstrate his superior merit; but in this case it answered. The lackey was summoned to an interview, questioned, and promoted. The Comte de Gouvon's son, the Abbé de Gouvon, had, he was told, conceived a liking for him. For the future he should be attached to the Abbé's service. The Abbé would educate him; his advancement would be assured.

The Abbé did teach him; he began to learn Latin, and to study Italian literature. Titularly a footman, he was, in reality, pupil and private secretary. Some members of the family with which he was connected aspired, he was given to understand, to the highest posts of diplomacy; and ambassadors, in those days, provided their own secretaries. A

confidential servant, trustworthy, intelligent, att
to the house and dependent on it, would be use
them, and would have much to hope from
The project, says Jean-Jacques, was "noble, jud
magnanimous, and truly worthy of a benefice
fore-sighted aristocrat"; but it did not appeal t
and he tells us why:—

"I did not grasp the scheme in all its bea
There was too much solid sense in it for me,
required me to remain too long in a subor
position. My mad ambition sought fortune o
the road of romantic adventure, and I did n
where the women came in under this arrangeme

It is difficult indeed to see where the w
could have come in under any arrangement fo
at Turin. Jean-Jacques had been a lackey
and the women knew it. He could not effac
knowledge from their minds merely by exhi
intelligence and meriting and obtaining prefer
For them, to whatever dignities he rose, he
always remain the promoted lackey; and the r
romance would consequently be barred; and h
of an age at which failure in gallantry is easil
fused with failure in life. That, we may su
was the inwardness of the exclamation and the
of the reflections which disposed him to throw
brilliant prospects and depart.

The decision was mad enough from the po
view of worldly wisdom, but it is easy enou
understand. Anything to escape from the w
who had known him as a lackey! The tramp

the Alps, delightful in itself, seemed well worth while with such an end in view. Moreover, the restraints of a regular life were irksome; and, at the end of the journey, Jean-Jacques "saw a vision of Madame de Warens." She had been kind to him, and she had corresponded with him; perhaps she would be glad to see him. In any case, there might be adventures in which women would "come in."

In that mood he ran up against Bâcle, an old friend of the days of his apprenticeship at Geneva; and that settled it. He and Bâcle were always together; he neglected both his studies and his duties to go about with Bâcle. Neither the Count nor the Abbé could ever find him when they wanted him. They sent for him, reprimanded him, and threatened to dismiss him; but he would not accept their rebukes, and was not to be intimidated by their threats. If they were not satisfied with him, he said, he would go. In fact, he had made up his mind to go whether they were satisfied with him or not.

He was taken by the shoulders and turned out of the room; and then he went off with Bâcle, rejoicing in his freedom.

CHAPTER VI

Back at Annecy—The choice of a profession—Jean Jacques as Seminarist—As musician—Jean Jacques goes to Lyons with his music-master, Nicoloz—Madame de Warens goes to Paris—Jean-Jacques returns to Annecy and finds her gone.

JEAN-JACQUES parted from Bâcle at Annecy, and never saw him again. He then knocked at Madame de Warens' door, not without qualms and doubts as to his reception. His claims on her were clearly of the slenderest; his reappearance was ample proof that he had not profited by her good advice. None the less, she made him welcome, saying, "Poor little fellow! Here you are again!" as though she already perceived that it was her allotted task in life to harbour this particular prodigal; and she gave him her best spare bedroom, and considered what could be done for him.

His narrative leaves the impression that he lodged with her for a long time, reading her favourite books—Bayle's Dictionary and the novels of Saint-Evremond—and eating the bread of idleness. No doubt he would willingly have done so if he could; but he seems to have transferred to this visit some recollections of a later period. We know enough dates to decide that his stay can only have been brief, and that the question of the choice of a profession was quickly brought up, though not by him. A Swiss relative,

M. d'Aubonne, came to see Madame de Warens, and she asked him to advise her: What was to be done with this embarrassing young man? For what walk in life was he suited? M. d'Aubonne examined Jean-Jacques and reported that he was fit for nothing except to become a village priest—a curious anticipation of the modern doctrine that, for the fool of the family, the Church is the appropriate career.

He was sent, on this hypothesis, to the Seminary—an establishment presided over by a certain Abbé Gros, an ecclesiastic of whom he records little except that he was in the habit of coming to Madame de Warens' house to lace her corsets for her, and that she used to run round the room, dragging him after her while he hung on to the laces. His principal instructor was an Abbé Gâtier,[1] an amiable man of whom he relates that he soon afterwards created a scandal in the diocese by the results of an intimacy with one of his female parishioners. The life of a Seminarist, however, did not suit him any better than that of a lackey, and at the end of two months he was sent home with an unfavourable report. There was no vice in him, it was said—which was hardly true; but he had no vocation—which is credible. The only subject which he had studied with any good result was music.

It was decided, therefore, to make him a musician; and the opportunity presented itself. Among the visitors to Madame de Warens' house was a M. Nicoloz, the Cathedral organist and musical director, whom Jean-Jacques, in the *Confessions*, calls M. Le Mâitre, substituting, it appears, his official

[1] The original, apparently, of the "Vicaire Savoyard."

title for his name. Nicoloz was willing to take a pupil, and to take him as a boarder. He and Jean-Jacques liked each other, so an arrangement in this sense was made. The Seminary fees had been defrayed by the Bishop, but those of the music-master were paid by Madame de Warens. His house was only a few yards distant from her own, so that Jean-Jacques' studies can hardly be said to have required his removal. Perhaps his patroness feared that people would talk; perhaps people had begun to talk; perhaps her confidential servant, Claude Anet—a youth of her own age and a fellow countryman of whom more presently—had raised and pressed the point. At any rate it seems clear that Madame de Warens, at this stage, not only was careful of appearances, but regarded her protégé as a boy, a dependent, and an inferior. She was kind as a grand lady is kind; but there was no attachment, and no sense of responsibility. That, indeed, is evident from her very casual treatment of him when, at the end of six months, it suited her convenience that he should be out of the way.

The time was the spring of 1730. Nicoloz had fallen out with the precentor and canons of the Cathedral. It occurred to him to avenge himself for slights inflicted on him by quitting his post without notice, taking all the musical scores with him, just when they were wanted for the Easter services. It seemed to Jean-Jacques the most natural thing in the world that Madame de Warens should be willing to help him in his felonious enterprise; he "would have done the same," he says, "in her place." Her method of helping him was to "order" Jean-Jacques to "ac-

company his preceptor and remain with him as long as he was wanted." Her object, Jean-Jacques thought, was to get him away from the society of one Venture de Villeneuve, an adventurer with whom he had struck up a friendship, and whom she regarded as a bad companion for him; but that theory does not carry conviction. If Venture de Villeneuve was an adventurer, Nicoloz was an habitual drunkard, and therefore no fit travelling-companion for a young man of an impressionable age; and Madame de Warens' orders had, in fact, quite other motives.

She and her kinsman, M. d'Aubonne, were jointly concerned in a secret diplomatic mission to Paris. Just as they were on the point of starting on their journey, Jean-Jacques, deprived of his preceptor, returned to his benefactress, with the evident intention of throwing himself once more upon her bountiful hospitality. It was awkward; for he was not in her confidence, and she wanted neither inquisitive questions nor irresponsible gossip about her movements. Somehow or other, she must get rid of him; and the easy and obvious way of doing this was to pack him off with Nicoloz. So she packed him off, and followed him almost as soon as he had started, wearing a mask when she walked down to the quay to take the coach. "I never really knew the secret of this journey," says Jean-Jacques, "though I am quite sure she would have told me if I had pressed her to do so."

Probably he did ask her, and she deceived him, or changed the subject instead of answering; nor can the question be fully answered even now in the light of the most careful historical researches. There

harder for merit, real or assumed, to pierce without their aid. But Jean-Jacques' attitude towards patrons was rather different from that of their other clients. The others looked ahead, and only sought from the patrons scope for the profitable employment of their energies; he had no energies and no ambitions. The energy which he found in the end was the energy of a man in a dream—the volcanic outcome of the long, slow, unconscious workings of the subliminal intelligence. As yet he was a dreamer merely—a dreamer who dreamt of nothing in particular; and the function of a patron to his mind was to support him while he dreamt, and to postpone the need of personal initiative. He could display initiative, as we shall find, when absolutely driven into a corner; but he much preferred to avoid the necessity. To avoid it now he went back to Madame de Warens.

But Madame de Warens was gone, and had left no address. Even her maid, Merceret, who remained in charge of her house, did not know what had become of her. "The only thing that I could do," says Jean-Jacques, "was to wait for her."

Not that he had any claims on her or any good grounds for supposing that she wanted to see him. He had not been living in her house but in that of his music-teacher, and she had just sent him off on a fool's errand intended to be of indefinite duration. But it was firmly fixed in his mind that she was his patroness and that he was her client for whom she had implicitly undertaken to provide; and therefore he took no initiative, but sat down to wait.

CHAPTER VII

Waiting for something to turn up—Flirtations—Mlle Giraud—Mlles Graffenried and de Galley—Journey to Fribourg with Madame de Warens' maid Merceret—Jean Jacques teaches music at Lausanne and Neuchâtel—The meeting with the Archimandrite—Arrival at Soleure—Meeting with the French Ambassador—Jean-Jacques goes to Paris—Hears that Madame de Warens is at Chambéry—Decides to rejoin her there—She procures him the post of clerk in the Ordnance Survey Department.

JEAN-JACQUES was now nineteen,—the age of an undergraduate in his first year,—an age when it is easy to be idle because time still seems immeasurably long. He had nothing to do but loaf, and he was of the stuff of which loafers are made. One may summarise his life for a season by saying that he hung about Annecy waiting for something to turn up—waiting, in particular, for his goddess to descend from the machine and cut the knot of his embarrassments. Only his goddess, as it happened, was far away, and his supply of ready money was small; while, in the absence of the mistress, he was flattered by the attentions of the maid.

The *Confessions* are our sole authority for the period. Save for a letter or two, we have no documents by which to check them, and they probably blend fiction with fact. There is no reason to doubt, however, that the picture as a whole is true, and the

details are not so momentous that small inaccuracies matter; so we will open the *Confessions*, and follow the Odyssey which they relate.

We first read of flirtations in which Jean-Jacques played only a passive part. A Mlle Giraud threw herself at his head, but he disliked her. She was ugly, and she was of humble station:—

"Seamstresses, chambermaids, and young women of the class of small shopkeepers had no attraction for me. Real ladies were what I wanted. We all have our preferences, and that has always been mine."

"Real ladies" presented themselves in the persons of Mlles Graffenried and de Galley. They found Jean-Jacques one day loafing by the bank of a stream, and they carried him off to spend the day with them at Madame de Galley's house during Madame de Galley's absence. The incident as described by him is quite a pastoral idyll, but it has no importance. Nothing came of it either at the time or afterwards—except that it was indirectly the cause of the recommencement of Jean-Jacques' wanderings.

Hoping to see Mlle Graffenried again, he had made himself conspicuous by waiting for her outside her house. She did not come out to him, and he began to feel foolish; and then, of course, he wrote to her. But the days of the penny post were not yet, and letters had to be delivered by special messengers. The special messenger whom Jean-Jacques elected to take into his confidence was no other than Mlle Giraud. A mattress-maker by calling, she worked

for Madame de Galley, and could easily make an excuse for knocking at the door. She delivered the note, and brought the answer; but she divined the nature of the communications that were being exchanged, and jealousy prompted her to whisper a suggestion to the maid Merceret.

Merceret, like Jean-Jacques, was tired of waiting for Madame de Warens, and she was thinking of returning to her father's house at Fribourg. Mlle Giraud proposed that she should take Jean-Jacques with her:—

"The little Merceret, who did not dislike me, thought this a very good idea. She treated the proposal as settled and agreed to; and, as I saw nothing to object to in the arrangement, I fell in with it, not expecting to be away for more than a week at the most. Giraud, who had quite different views, planned the whole affair for us. . . . Merceret undertook to pay my expenses; and, in order that she might recoup in one way what she had to disburse in another, it was decided that she should send her luggage on ahead, and that we should make the journey on foot."

So it was done; and once more, Jean-Jacques assures us, nothing happened, in spite of Mlle Merceret's provocations—in spite of her insistence that he should share her room because she was afraid of being left alone in the dark. It simply did not occur to him, he says, to take advantage of his opportunities; and "if poor Merceret was reckoning on anything of the kind in return for her expenditure on my behalf, she was duped, for we arrived at

Fribourg on precisely the same terms on which we had left Annecy." One infers from what follows that she was, in fact, disappointed with her companion, and also that her father viewed neither her cavalier nor her proceedings with enthusiasm :—

"Towards the end of the journey the warmth of Mlle Merceret's manner diminished. After our arrival she was actually cold to me; and her father, who was not exactly a man of opulence, did not receive me very kindly. I had to go and sleep in the inn. I went to see them on the following day. They invited me to dinner, and I accepted the invitation; but we parted without any tearful demonstrations. I went back to my pot-house, and left the town the next morning, without any clear plans as to my destination."

It was a pity, Jean-Jacques goes on to reflect, that he did not marry Merceret and remain in Fribourg to follow the calling of her father, who was an organist. The inwardness of the reflection seems to be that, *faute de mieux*, he would have been glad to fasten himself on a father-in-law and look even to a provincial organist as the patron who would provide. Perhaps it was the nature of his reception which discouraged him from propounding the scheme. At any rate, he found himself left, for the time being, to make his way in the world without the help of patrons.

One may ask why he did not go to his father at Nyon, but plausible reasons are easily conjectured. The "best of fathers" had married a second wife;

and it is not where a stepmother controls the larder and orders the dinner that the fatted calf is most likely to be killed in honour of the returning prodigal—especially when the prodigal has been seen wandering about the country with a female companion of light behaviour and uncertain antecedents. Already, while on his way to Fribourg, Jean-Jacques had called on the second Madame Rousseau at Nyon, and she had only "pretended" to invite him to stay to supper. She probably would not even have "pretended" that she wanted to have him living in the house; he probably divined as much; and therefore—the explanation seems sufficient—he came no nearer to Nyon than Lausanne. There, thrown for once on his own initiative and resources, he assumed the name of Vaussore de Villeneuve, and gave music lessons.

No doubt he was, as he says, a very incompetent teacher; but his account of his incapacity may be one of his characteristic exaggerations. He had a good ear, and he had studied for six months; he must at least have known more than the worst of his pupils. Still, the struggle for life was too hard for him, and he migrated towards the winter to Neuchâtel. There, according to the *Confessions*, he had more success; but we nevertheless find him writing to "the best of fathers" to ask for money. "If," he says, "I have a thousand times refused a dazzling fortune, that is because I prefer obscure freedom to brilliant servitude." But, in the meantime, he has "contracted a few debts," and cannot conveniently leave the town unless he is helped to discharge them.

What answer was accorded to this letter we do not know, but an adventure in a country inn relieved Jean-Jacques of his immediate necessities. It was at Boudry—a village famous as the birthplace of Marat—where he was dining:—

"I saw there a man with a long beard, attired in a violet-coloured costume of the Greek style, with a fur cap and a distinguished manner, who had great difficulty in making himself understood, as he only spoke an almost unintelligible jargon, more like Italian than any other language. I could understand him fairly well, and was the only person present who could do so; with the innkeeper and the people of the country he could only communicate by signs. I addressed a few words to him in Italian, which he understood perfectly; he rose and embraced me with delight. We quickly made friends, and from that moment I acted as his interpreter. As his dinner was good, whereas mine was indifferent, he invited me to share his meal, and I made no difficulty about that. We clinched our acquaintance while drinking and conversing. . . . He told me that he was a Greek prelate, and an Archimandrite from Jerusalem, commissioned to collect funds in Europe for the re-establishment of the Holy Sepulchre. . . . He was very pleased with the results of the collection up to date; but he had encountered great difficulties in Germany, as he did not know a word of German, of Latin, or of French, and had to depend upon Greek, Turkish, and the *Lingua Franca*—which were of little use to him in the country in which he found himself. He proposed that I should accompany him in the

character of secretary and dragoman. . . . Our agreement was quickly concluded. I asked for nothing, and he made liberal promises. Without any sort of security, without knowing anything about him, I placed myself in his charge, and on the following day we started for Jerusalem."

The story reads like fiction, but there is evidence that it is true. In the Registers of the Councils of both Fribourg and Berne there are records of the appearance and proceedings of the Archimandrite and "his companion." On one occasion they were accorded the hospitality of a convent; on another they were ordered to leave the Canton. Of the various eloquent speeches, however, which Jean-Jacques avers that he delivered before city fathers, we find no trace; and the projected journey to Jerusalem came to an untimely termination at Soleure.

Soleure, and not Berne, was in those days the seat of the Swiss Federal Government and the residence of the diplomatic representatives of the Powers. The French Ambassador, the Marquis de Bonac, had previously been Ambassador at Constantinople. He could talk both Italian and *Lingua Franca*, and he knew all about the Holy Sepulchre. He interviewed Jean-Jacques and the Archimandrite separately, sent the latter about his business, and, as the former had declared himself a French subject, claimed jurisdiction, and detained him. He and his wife, and M. de la Martinière, the Secretary of the Embassy, all felt an interest in the picturesque young vagabond, and decided to do what they could for him. They asked him what his own wishes were,

and he said that he would like to go to Paris.
interpreter at the Embassy, M. Marianne, ha
to know a Swiss Colonel Godard in the
service who wanted a companion and tutor
nephew. They sent Jean Jacques off to him
letter of introduction, much good advice,
hundred francs to pay his way with.

He set off on foot, full of high hopes,
the end of his journey found only disappoin
Colonel Godard, who was to have done so m
him, turned out to be "a wretched old miser."
idea was that Jean-Jacques should become a
and live on his pay, while being at the sam
"attached to the service of his nephew in the c
not of a tutor but of a valet without wages."
did not suit Jean-Jacques. He had left Turin b
he was tired of being a lackey, and it was
order to resume that calling that he had co
Paris. He looked for other employment, and
not find any; and then, having spent all the
he had brought with him, and also a good deal
money that M. de Bonac had subsequently sent
he "remembered poor mamma," and began t
Where was she? Could any one help him to fin

Paris was not so large a place in those day
inquiry need be hopeless. A Madame Merve
to whom Jean-Jacques had brought a letter of
duction and who had been kind to him and
invited him to dinner, aided him in his search.
learnt that Madame de Warens had been in
but had left again, though whether for S
Switzerland, or Turin she did not know.
vague information sufficed. Lyons was on the

to each of these three places; and at Lyons Madame de Warens had a friend—a Mademoiselle du Châtelet—of whom further inquiries might be made. So Jean-Jacques took to the road again, and presented himself to Mademoiselle du Châtelet and asked his questions.

Mademoiselle du Châtelet said that she did not know where Madame de Warens was, but could find out. Very possibly what she really wanted to ascertain was whether her friend was willing that the wanderer whom she had so unceremoniously sent about his business should return to her. At any rate Jean-Jacques had to wait—and to wait in such an impecunious condition that he could only lodge in the poorest inns and was more than once reduced to the necessity of sleeping out of doors. Some of his ugliest experiences belong to this period of his peregrinations. He rubbed shoulders with vice in some of its most abominably abnormal shapes. The details are quite unprintable in these pages; but the fact itself is important to his biographer, as it was to him. Jean-Jacques was never a coarse writer, unless it be in one or two passages in the *Confessions*, but one does find a strange unintended indelicacy mingled with his sentimentalism; and this is the secret of it. The seamy side of the tramp's life had left its impress. He never learnt to understand where reticence on his part would have been becoming—where reticence, or even ignorance, on the part of others should have been assumed. We shall have proof of that when we come to look at *La nouvelle Héloïse* and *Emile*; and it is as well to be prepared for it, though the story need not be interrupted to discuss the matter now.

While waiting for Madame de Warens' letter, Jean-Jacques earned small sums of money by copying music. At last the letter came, and was kind and satisfactory. Madame de Warens had not returned to Switzerland or proceeded to Turin, but was living at Chambéry. Jean-Jacques might come to her; she would see what could be done for him; she enclosed money for the expenses of the journey.

So the tramp tramped on again, not hurrying himself in the least but loafing and loitering, impressionable to the influences of the savage scenery which other eighteenth-century travellers found so repellent, stopping every now and again to roll stones over giddy Alpine precipices into roaring Alpine torrents. His problems were resolved; his goal was fixed for him; his responsibilities had been shifted on to other shoulders. "I approached," he says, "with feelings of tenderness the excellent friend whom I was to see again. I enjoyed in advance the pleasure of living near her."

And his excellent friend, as it happened, had already found employment for him. For her, as yet, he was only "this poor young man" — a proper object of benevolence. She introduced him as "this poor young man" to the Head of the Ordnance Survey Department of Savoy. "Thank him," she said to her protégé; "he will give you bread." But the bread, as a matter of fact, was not to be given but to be earned. Jean-Jacques, who had been the valet of an Italian nobleman and the interpreter of an Archimandrite, was now to become a clerk in connection with the Cadastral Survey.

CHAPTER VIII

Claude Anet—Madame de Warens' gardener and also her lover—Jean Jacques throws up his clerkship and resumes teaching music—His relations with his pupils—Kissed by Madame Lard—Tells Madame de Warens—Madame de Warens proposes herself as his mistress—He and Claude Anet share her favours—Death of Claude Anet.

Madame de Warens lived at Chambéry in a gloomy and dilapidated house, the property of the King of Sardinia's Minister of Finance. She had taken it to oblige him, practically under compulsion, when he could find no other tenant, because she was given to understand that her pension would be stopped or continued as he advised. It was, as a matter of fact, continued; and Jean-Jacques came to live with Madame de Warens while working at the Cadastral Survey. There also resided in her house her steward, Claude Anet, born in 1706 and consequently seven years younger than his mistress and six years older than Jean-Jacques.

About Claude Anet's antecedents Jean-Jacques seems to have known next to nothing. "He was," he says, "a peasant from Montreux who in his childhood used to gather herbs in the Jura to make Swiss tea, and whom Madame de Warens had taken into her service because of his knowledge of drugs, finding it convenient to have a lackey who was also a

botanist." It may have been so; but the antiquaries have discovered that Claude Anet was the nephew of M. de Warens' gardener, and that he and Madame de Warens left Vaud for Annecy and abjured Protestantism very nearly on the same day. The inference is obvious—and the antiquaries have not failed to draw it—that there was here collusion as well as coincidence, and that while the stories of Madame de Warens' love for the pastor and the professor of philosophy rest upon the flimsiest foundation, there is a presumption that, even at Vevey, she had thrown the spell of her fascination over the gardener's nephew.

Nor was it long before Jean-Jacques discovered on what terms she was living with her attendant. The appearances, indeed, were preserved, as was essential if Madame de Warens' position in provincial society was not to be compromised; and Claude Anet, who was six or seven and twenty, was grave and discreet beyond his years, so that at first Jean-Jacques only saw in him the serious and responsible major-domo, a man of probity, authority, and common sense, "circumspect in his conduct, cold in his manners, laconic and sententious in his conversation"—a superior from whom he took his orders and in whose presence he "dared not forget himself." But one day Madame de Warens and Claude Anet quarrelled. The major-domo "listened only to his despair," and drank a bottle of laudanum. Madame de Warens, discovering the empty flask, screamed, and ran for emetics; and so the truth came out, Madame de Warens in her anguish "confessing everything" to Jean-Jacques.

It made no difference to him. "I desired above

all things," he says, "to see her happy"; and we need not waste moral indignation over his willingness that she should achieve her happiness in this particular way. He was a junior, a subordinate, and a dependent; the business of his seniors and superiors was not his business; the situation had to develop before it could be held to concern him intimately. There was no jealousy in the matter, and therefore it is not surprising to read that at this stage "we lived together on terms that made all three of us happy." Only, as it happened, the situation did not remain stationary, but developed; and the conditions thus conducive to general felicity disappeared.

Jean-Jacques, as has been said, was at this time a junior clerk in the Survey Department. The work was hard, and he hated it. He says that he was kept in a stuffy office for eight hours a day, and that his fellow-clerks were disagreeable persons who neither washed themselves nor brushed their hair. So he first obtained leave of absence and afterwards threw up his post.

His leave was spent partly at Geneva, partly at Cluses, where the Cordelian friars entertained him. One of the objects of his journey seems to have been—though there is nothing about this in the *Confessions*—to induce his father to recoup Madame de Warens for the expenses which she had incurred on his behalf. He never got as far as Nyon, however, and the negotiations were conducted by correspondence. Madame de Warens had herself apparently written to Isaac Rousseau on the subject, and "the best of fathers" had left her letters unanswered. Jean-

Jacques reproaches him with his negligence; and it is piquant to find the "proud Republican" of later days protesting that his protectress "has always received punctual replies when she has had the honour of corresponding with the nobility and even with the King himself."

Nothing came of the protest for the moment, however. It was not until a later date that Isaac Rousseau and Madame de Warens exchanged civilities; and, in the meantime, Jean-Jacques continued to live under her protection, ceased to be a clerk, and once more became a teacher of music.

The story which follows is his own story, unconfirmed by collateral evidence. At the few points at which we can check it from independent sources we detect inaccuracies, and it is clear that Jean-Jacques wrote from a vague recollection which he allowed his vanity to prompt. What the narrative gives us is a vain man's reminiscences of a vain boy's doings. The vain man has been described as "the great high priest of those who kiss and tell"; and the depositions of such, whether cynical or sentimental, fail to inspire confidence in the absolute veracity of the deponent. Still we must take the story and repeat it as we find it.

On his own showing, Jean-Jacques was no great musician as yet; but the competition at Chambéry was not severe, and he had no difficulty in getting pupils. No doubt he was a presentable and, in his way, an insinuating youth, though lacking, then as always, in distinction; and he evidently was very pleased with himself and his new manner of life. The bureau had been detestable, but now:—

"Instead of all that" (he writes), "behold me launched all at once in the world of fashion, admitted to, and run after in, the best houses. Everywhere there was a gracious and caressing welcome for me, and a general air of festivity. Amiable young ladies, attired in their best frocks, await my coming and make it clear that they are glad to see me. My eye lights only upon charming objects, amid the fragrance of roses and orange blossoms. We sing, we chat, we laugh, we amuse ourselves. When I leave a house, it is only in order to go through the same round of gaiety elsewhere."

No doubt it is an over-coloured picture. Only in Arcadia — and Savoy was not Arcadia — can we believe the career of a music-master to have consisted of an unbroken sequence of such idylls; and as Jean-Jacques admits that he was frequently unpunctual at his lessons, one may suspect that it was not really "roses roses all the way" along his path. Yet that may well have been how the vain boy freshly emancipated from the office saw himself; and it is at least clear that his duties as a young and good-looking tutor introduced him into a new world of grace and elegance.

We have his reminiscences of a good many of his pupils: Mademoiselle de Mellarède, who had "brilliant eyes and a small waist," and startled Jean-Jacques by taking her lessons *en déshabillé*; Mademoiselle de Menthon, "very small, very timid, and very pale," with "a scar due to a scald" on her breast, that fascinated her teacher's eyes; Mademoiselle de Challes, of a certain age, "no longer

a beauty, but notable for her elegance and her even temper"; a young Frenchwoman boarding at the Convent of the Visitation, who spoke with the "drawl of the nuns," but laid herself out, we are informed, to be witty "in order to make me more assiduous in keeping my engagements." But all these were of the aristocracy; and it is hardly to be doubted that they "kept their place," and required their music-master to keep his. His dreams were then as always of romantic triumphs among the nobly born,—"il me fallait des princesses,"—but his actual romantic successes were generally among ladies of a station at least as modest as his own. And so we come to Madame Lard.

She was not a princess—far from it; she was the grocer's wife. Jean-Jacques was giving lessons to her daughter, a beautiful girl,—"the very model of a Greek statue,"—but one whose "indolence, coldness, and insensibility were quite incredible." Jean-Jacques believed that, if he had been enterprising, she would have let him "proceed to extremes from sheer stupidity"; but that is as it may be. Mademoiselle Lard ended, as the Chambéry records show, by marrying the Chambéry doctor, so that it is quite possible that she disdained the music-master, and that the apparent lack of sensibility was intended to discourage enterprise. Or it may be that it indicated disapproval of the levity of the behaviour of her mother, of whom we read:—

"Madame Lard added to her own natural vivacity all the liveliness that would have been proper to her daughter. She had a wide-awake

little face, wrinkled and pock-marked, with small eyes, ardent and slightly red, because they were nearly always sore. Every morning when I arrived at her house, I found a cup of coffee with cream ready for me, and the mother never failed to welcome me with a kiss full upon my lips—a kiss that I should have liked to pass on to the daughter to see how she would take it. It was all so simply done, and meant so little, that, even when M. Lard was present, the kissing proceeded all the same."

Probably, however, M. Lard was not present very often, and did not suspect the frequency of the kisses exchanged; for Jean-Jacques goes on to say:—

"I lent myself to all these caresses with my usual doltish stupidity, accepting them in all good faith merely as indications of her goodwill to me. Still I was sometimes importuned by them, as the lively Madame Lard was disposed to be exigent; and if I had passed the shop in the course of the day without dropping in to see her, there would have been trouble. Indeed, when I was in a hurry, I had to take a roundabout route through other streets, knowing that it would by no means be so easy for me to leave her house as to enter it."

So that the upshot of all the romantic dreams was only an uncomfortable and incomplete flirtation with a grocer's wife in the back parlour of a grocer's shop; and if Jean-Jacques had only held his tongue about the lady's favours, one would regard the episode as insignificant as well as banal. It was his nature, however, as we have seen already and shall often see

again, to kiss and tell. He "told mamma," as he says, precisely in those words, and so the incident had consequences.

He told her, he adds, in the innocence of his heart, because it was his habit to tell her everything. "My heart," he puts it, "was open before her as before God." But he was twenty-one—an age at which a young man seldom opens his heart to women quite so innocently as all that—and "mamma" had herself made a confession to him, and he "had learnt with pain that another could live with her on terms of greater intimacy than myself," so that this explanation is lacking in verisimilitude. One surmises rather that Jean-Jacques, in talking, wished—*se faire valoir*; and what follows shows that, if that was his purpose, he succeeded in it :—

"Mamma did not view the proceedings in the same simple spirit as myself. Where I had seen only acts of friendliness she saw amorous advances. She was of opinion that Madame Lard, making it a point of honour to leave me less a fool than she had found me, would presently find a way of compelling me to understand her meaning."

And therefore she adopted her own very singular method of delivering the victim from the snare.

Hitherto she had laughed and been playful with her young protégé. Now she changed her manner, and became "grave" and "moral." He wondered what was the meaning of it all, and she took him into the garden to explain. He was grown up, she said, and the time had come when she must treat him as

a man; otherwise the temptations of youth might be too much for him. So she offered herself and her favours—not the monopoly of her favours, but a share of them. Jean-Jacques might thenceforward, if he chose, enjoy the same privileges as Claude Anet. He might; but there should be no compulsion, and he must not hurry his decision. Let him take a week to think the matter over, and then let her know what he thought about it.

That is his version of the story, and no other exists.

The week passed, we read, and Jean-Jacques accepted the offer made to him. He accepted it, he says, without passion, or enthusiasm, or voluptuous desire, and he wept in his mistress's embrace as if guilty of an unnatural crime. These things are mysteries; but there is nothing unbelievable in that, even if we believe that his stories of Madame Lard's kisses had been told with a purpose, and that he had been jealous of Claude Anet's status in the house. Madame de Warens was a grand lady compared with him, and his senior by thirteen years. He had not thought of her in that light before; she appealed to his sentiment rather than his senses; he was abashed and nervous. It was an honour, of course; it was preferment; it removed a slight, and levelled an inequality. And yet, seeing that he had always called her his "mamma," and she had always taken the maternal tone with him——

One can imagine his reflections, or rather his instinctive hesitations, running on those lines. One can conjecture, too, that the hesitations would have been more formidable if Claude Anet had not trodden the path before him. Then egoism would not have

rushed in where sentiment had feared to tread. But, as things were, vanity had staked out the course for him. Already as near to the throne as he desired to be, he could not brook a rival nearer to it. The unknown was alarming, but still—

Mamma, he says,—he still calls her "mamma,"—found no voluptuous ecstasy in love, or at least behaved as if she found none. She was "caressing and tranquil" in the new relations as in the old. But these things also are mysteries; and her lover was lacking in experience, so that his criticism strikes one as presumptuous. He did not know; he could not judge. Enough to note what he says, and proceed, inquiring: What of Claude Anet, the grave and reverend steward whose exclusive privileges were thus invaded? How did the favourite take his summary deposition, and the promotion of his humble friend?

Well, Claude Anet, we are told, was "discreet," and pretended not to know, but evidently did know, and apparently did not mind. Jean-Jacques and Madame de Warens were for him "two children who must be indulged"; he was for them "a respectable man whose good opinion they must manage to preserve":—

"She showed me how much she loved him in order that I might love him equally, and she insisted even more upon her friendship for him than upon her esteem, because that was the feeling that I was most capable of sharing. How often she melted our hearts and made us embrace with tears, assuring us that we were both alike necessary to the happiness of her life."

And then again :—

"Thus there was established between the three of us an association perhaps without parallel in the history of the world. We shared in common all our aspirations, all our anxieties, all our emotions—all of them being confined to our little circle. Our habit of living together, to the exclusion of all other interests, became so confirmed that, if one of us was absent from a meal, or if a fourth person sat down with us, we felt our whole scheme of life upset; and, in spite of our separate liaisons with our mistress, we were less happy in a *tête-à-tête* than when we all three met together. We were never embarrassed because of the confidence we felt in one another."

Women, Jean-Jacques thought, might "smile maliciously" at this remarkable situation. Some women may have done so; but there has been at least one illustrious woman who did not. George Sand at Venice teaching Pagello to murmur the phrase "*our* love for Alfred," and writing that she wished to "live with both of you and make you both happy without belonging exclusively to either," had clearly learnt her lesson from the *Confessions* and applied it with unimpeachable solemnity. Only we know that George Sand failed, and we cannot feel sure that Jean-Jacques succeeded; for Claude Anet died very soon after the new society had been composed, and Jean-Jacques does not tell the truth about his death.

The steward, according to Jean-Jacques' story, went plant-hunting on the mountains, overheated

himself, caught a cold which developed into pleurisy, and succumbed after five days' illness. "That," he comments, "is how I lost the best friend I ever had in all my life"; but the dates disprove the story. Claude Anet's death certificate has been found; and it appears that he died on the 13th of March 1734. It is not in the month of March that botanists seek aromatic herbs, and get overheated in the quest, in the high Alps, for then the snow is on the ground. It follows that the story is pure fantasy; and M. Mugnier suggests, not without plausibility, that Claude Anet's death may have been due, at least in part, to chagrin and shock at seeing himself supplanted.

He died, at any rate, from whatever cause; and Jean-Jacques remembered, in the midst of the tears that he professes to have shed for him, that he "inherited all his clothes, and especially a fine black coat which I had particularly admired."

CHAPTER IX

Madame de Warens and the adventurers—Jean-Jacques obtains from his father his share of his mother's dowry—Resolves to qualify himself for a post as private tutor—Falls ill—Supplanted in Madame de Warens' favour by Wintzinried—Goes to Montpellier to consult Dr. Fizes—Love affair with Madame de Larnage—Returns to Chambéry and finds his place definitely taken by Wintzinried.

JEAN-JACQUES inherited Claude Anet's black coat, but not a double portion, or even a single portion, of his spirit. He could take his place, perhaps, as a lover, but certainly not as a steward; and a steward—one who knew her business better than she knew it herself and could, on occasion, put his foot down—was what Madame de Warens chiefly needed.

She was a fat, good-natured, fussy little body, with a restless mind and a firm conviction that her talents qualified her to succeed in public life and commercial speculation. Her failure as a manufacturer of silk stockings had only temporarily disconcerted her. She had come to Chambéry, according to her friend, M. de Conzié, because Annecy was "too small a place for the projects which she cherished." One of her projects was to establish at Chambéry a Botanical Garden and a School of Pharmacy, with one of her lovers as Director and the other as his assistant. That scheme fell through for lack of official support; but many other schemes of various kinds were enter-

tained in place of it, and Madame de Warens was marked out as the natural prey of any adventurer with a glib tongue and a plausible plan for making his fortune and hers.

Such adventurers called upon her by the dozen. They began by promising her wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, and ended by borrowing small sums for the relief of their immediate needs. Claude Anet had taken the responsibility of showing them the door. Jean-Jacques could not face the situation in that high-handed style. "I used to groan," he writes; but groaning was of no avail. "I used to protest," he adds, "but I was not listened to. I was too young and of too lively a disposition to have the right to exercise common sense. When I tried to take the tone of a censor, mamma kissed me and put me in my proper place." And meanwhile mamma's substance was being squandered; and Jean-Jacques helped her to squander it by leaving her and travelling at her expense. Others, he argued, would have got her money from her if he did not.

"I swear" (he writes) "that I would gladly have been more economical if mamma would really have profited by my parsimony; but as it was certain that every penny I refused passed into the hands of some rascal, I took advantage of her generosity and shared the plunder with them. Like the dog that runs out of the butcher's shop, I carried off my own mouthful of the meat that I could not save."

One of his excursions was to Besançon, where he proposed to take music lessons. He took no music

lessons, and only remained at Besançon two or three days, and the trip cost him—or rather cost Madame de Warens—800 francs. Another journey, inspired by a more reasonable motive, was to Geneva, where he succeeded in collecting from his father the 6500 florins due to him as his share of his mother's dowry. "I hastened," he says, "to lay this at the feet of mamma. My heart beat with joy as I travelled to her, and the moment at which I placed the money in her hands was a thousand times more pleasant to me than that at which I received it in my own." But that is not quite true. Jean-Jacques did not give the money to Madame de Warens, but merely asked her to take care of it for him. She spent most of it on him, as he admits—some of it, as we know, in defraying debts which he had incurred at Chambéry; and when he wanted the balance, he drew it.

Except for these journeys, Jean-Jacques' life was, for the next two or three years, quite uneventful. He "had given up his music pupils," he says, though he does not tell us why. Possibly his services as a teacher had ceased to be in request. His unpunctuality must have been one obstacle to professional advancement; his habit of kissing the grocer's wife may have been another. Chambéry was a small town, and in small towns such proceedings get talked about. Madame de Warens, however, had come to the conclusion that it was worth while to "form" him—to make a gentleman of him; and, with that end in view, she had him taught dancing and fencing. He made little progress in either of these accomplishments; but he read books, and made friends.

He was not yet a philosopher; he was not yet a man of letters. He had not even any ambition in either of these directions. In so far as he looked ahead at all he only hoped to become private secretary or private tutor to "persons of quality." That aspiration is set forth in a long letter which he wrote to his father in 1736 – that is to say, when he was twenty-four. The "best of fathers" had, it seems, somewhat tardily realised his parental responsibilities, and reproached his son for his delay in choosing a career. Jean-Jacques, in answer, argues and explains. He has not had the means to study for the Church or for the Bar. His trade of engraver was not to his taste. He has been at pains to study music because that is a resource which he can always fall back upon when other resources fail. But the post for which he is really resolved to fit himself is that of secretary to a "great nobleman" or "governor" to his children. So far as the moral qualities requisite for the latter calling go, he can already write himself a testimonial:—

"I am religious, and I fear God. Moreover, though I am subject to great weaknesses, and fuller of faults than any other man whom I know, I am aware of the vices that I must correct. In fine, young people would be very fortunate if they always fell into the hands of guardians who hate vice and love virtue as intensely as I do."

The position of tutor, he goes on to admit, does not amount to a solid establishment in life; but let there be no undue anxiety on that score. Jean-

Jacques has no intention of plunging into the struggle in a hurry. He is only indicating how he would be able to earn his living "if present resources should fail." Madame de Warens, he points out, has, for the last eight years, provided for all his needs, given him board and lodging, lent him books, paid for his education, set him an "edifying example," and "diverted his loose conduct into a moral channel." This state of things, he promises, shall continue as long as possible. He will never desert Madame de Warens, but will implore her to allow him to spend the remainder of his days with her.

"Nor is this" (he proceeds) "a frivolous manner of demonstrating my gratitude to her. This wise and amiable lady has sentiments so noble that she is sufficiently rewarded for conferring benefits by observing that benefits are conferred, and by receiving the unceasing homage of a heart full of zeal and esteem and attachment and respect for her."

Jean-Jacques was twenty-four when he wrote that; and he was not joking. He did not regard himself as sponging on Madame de Warens, but as sacrificing his prospects in order to give her the perpetual pleasure of his society; and he begged the best of fathers to write to her and persuade her to allow him to continue with her on those terms.

We do not know what line the best of fathers took in the matter. Probably he let things slide, taking no line at all, his energies having been exhausted by the composition of a single letter of remonstrance. So far as we know him, he was that

sort of man. At all events, Jean-Jacques remained with Madame de Warens until he fell ill.

His first illness was due to an explosion which occurred when he was making a chemical experiment. Temporarily blinded, he thought he was going to die, and made his will. The will has been discovered, and we gather from it that he had contracted considerable debts, and also that he was a good enough Catholic to bequeath money to three different monasteries, that masses might be said for the repose of his soul. He recovered from the results of the accident only to develop other ailments; and this second malady brings us to a section of the *Confessions* which is full of gross errors as to dates and facts.

Jean-Jacques' lungs, he tells us, were affected. He was threatened with phthisis and was spitting blood. The gloomy house at Chambéry was bad for him. He needed change of diet and change of air:—

"Mamma ordered milk, and wanted me to go into the country to take it. I consented on condition that she would come too. That was all that was necessary in order to induce her to make up her mind. It only remained for us to choose the place. . . . 'Let us look out,' I said, 'for some retreat far enough away from the town for us to be able to live in peace there, near enough for us to be able to run into town as often as we need to.' And so it was arranged. After looking about us for a little while, we settled at Les Charmettes, an estate belonging to M. de Conzié, almost at the gates of Chambéry, but as quiet and solitary as if one had been a hundred leagues away. . . . After having tried two or three of the

there, we selected the prettiest of them, which
e property of a nobleman then serving in the
named M. Noiret. . . . So far as I can re-
r, we took possession of it towards the end of
mmer of 1736. I was transported with delight
first occasion on which we slept there. 'Oh!
a,' said I to this dear friend, as I kissed her
ars of tenderness and joy, 'this abode should
seat of happiness and innocence. If we do
d happiness and innocence here, it will be
for us to look for them elsewhere.'"

at is the story of the most famous, and the
oetical, episode in Jean-Jacques' life—the story
one period in which he claims to have enjoyed
and Arcadian happiness. All the biographers
n it with emotion, eloquence, and enthusiasm,
cally accepting the sentimental version of the
And the story has not a word of truth in it.
her, to speak quite accurately, so many other
are true as well, that, when we come to look at
ry at close quarters, all the sentiment evaporates,
realise that Jean-Jacques did indeed, as he
n his *Confessions*, confuse the things which
y happened with the things which he would
ked to happen.

the first place, the dates are wrong. Madame
rens took possession of Les Charmettes, not in
mmer of 1736, but two years later; we have
ase and know. And in the meantime things
appened—things which Jean-Jacques wrongly
ents as having been posterior to the settlement
s Charmettes. Nor is his error merely of

chronological significance. It was at this moment, and not later, as he tells us, that Madame de Warens gave him a rival in the person of Wintzinried.

"This young man" (says Jean Jacques) "came from the country of Vaud. His father was hall-porter, or captain as he called himself, of the Castle of Chillon. The son of this captain was a journeyman barber and was travelling about the country in the pursuit of his avocation when he introduced himself to Madame de Warens, who gave him a friendly reception, as was her practice with all wayfarers, especially those who came from her own country. He was big, blond, insipid, with a flat face and a flat mind, vain, foolish, ignorant, and impertinent."

Those were the newcomer's defects; but he had also his qualities. He was "zealous, diligent, and trustworthy in the execution of all small commissions entrusted to him"—commissions not, it would seem, exclusively or mainly of a tonsorial character. He would turn his hand to anything, working himself and keeping workmen up to the mark. He also cut a fine figure on horseback, and knew it; and all this display and boisterous activity, says Jean-Jacques, "imposed upon poor mamma":—

"She thought she had found in this young man a perfect treasure for the management of her business. Wishing to attach him to her service, she employed to that end all the means that she considered suitable, not forgetting the means in which she placed the greatest confidence."

That means—it can mean nothing else—that Wintzinried was admitted to the same intimacy as Claude Anet and Jean-Jacques himself. Whether Jean-Jacques knew this at the moment or only discovered it later is not clear. What is certain is that he walked out of the house almost as soon as his rival entered it, whether because he resented the intrusion, or because the intruder had made his position uncomfortable—and this not only before the sojourn at Les Charmettes took place, but before there was any talk of it. It follows as a pitiful anti-climax after the resolution never to desert Madame de Warens, but to reward her for benefits bestowed with the unceasing homage of a heart full of esteem, etc.; but it is true.

His health was, of course, the pretext. He had been reading medical books and, in addition to the ailments enumerated, believed himself to be suffering from a "polypus of the heart." We need not dwell upon the symptoms. Auscultation was unknown in those days; and it was practically impossible to diagnose a disease of the heart unless the patient died and was dissected. Jean-Jacques' speedy recovery is sufficient proof that nothing serious was the matter with him. He was already cured of his malady, whatever it may have been, before he reached the consulting-room of Dr. Fizes, the Montpellier specialist. Fizes, who was really a good man, and was afterwards appointed physician to the Duc d'Orléans, laughed in his face and said, "All that you want, my young friend, is to drink a good glass of wine from time to time." The inference seems reasonable that strained relations had at least

as much to do with this long journey as any cardiac trouble.

The view is confirmed by a careful reading of the letters written from Montpellier. They indicate unmistakably that, though there had been no open rupture, things were no longer quite on the old footing. Reproaches are mingled in them with expressions of affection. Madame de Warens, Jean-Jacques complains, does not write to him often enough, and neglects to send him money, or to provide him with letters of introduction to the aristocracy. He is in difficulties, unable to pay his bills, obliged to pawn his valuables, fearful that he may have to "leave here with my affairs in disorder and get to Chambéry as best I can." But Madame de Warens does not seem to want him at Chambéry. When he talks of returning in February, she urges him to stay away until June. Very possibly it was in order to prevent him from returning too soon that she withheld the money which she had promised. Apparently she had spent it in the purchase of a farm, and would have no cash available until the next instalment of her pension was paid; and that may very well have been an investment with a purpose, arranged, or advised, by Wintzinried. Or it may be that she and Wintzinried, knowing how much money Jean-Jacques had taken away with him, had done sums in their heads and calculated that his alleged necessities must be due to his extravagances—that he must have been spending money on other women.

If they guessed that, they guessed correctly. Jean-Jacques had been unfaithful, and had planned a further infidelity. On the way to Montpellier he had

met Madame de Larnage. She made advances—so he says—and for some days he shared her post-chaise and her apartment. "I may say," he adds, "that I owe it to Madame de Larnage that I shall not die without having known what true pleasure is." When he parted from Madame de Larnage, it was with a promise soon to meet her again. He was to remain only a few weeks at Montpellier; and then, when Madame de Larnage had had time to take her precautions against ill-natured gossip, he was to join her at her home in Provence and spend the winter with her. She would introduce him to her daughter; he should have every facility for pursuing the régime which the doctors ordered. And therefore:—

"I thought of nothing but Bourg Saint-Andiol, and the delightful life that awaited me there. . . . I saw nothing but Madame de Larnage and her environment. All the rest of the universe was of no account to me; mamma herself was forgotten."

He wrote to mamma, however, concerning this project, though he omitted the essential details of it:—

"I forgot to tell you, when speaking of Montpellier, that I have decided to leave here towards the end of December, and to go and drink asses' milk in Provence at a very pretty place about two leagues from Saint-Esprit. The air is excellent there, and I shall have good company—acquaintances made in the course of my journey—and expect to be able to live more cheaply than at Montpellier. What is your advice in this matter?"

One wonders whether Madame de Warens, with the help of Wintzinried, read between the lines. If she did, she may certainly have found in her suspicions an additional reason for holding back the money; and it is a fair guess that it was anxiety about money rather than affection for Madame de Warens that decided Jean Jacques to return home without paying his contemplated visit to Madame de Larnage. Certainly the reasons assigned for the decision in the *Confessions* do not carry conviction. He says, among other things, that he was afraid lest, while ostensibly the lover of Madame de Larnage, he should become enamoured of her daughter, and that with this fear there were mingled "certain reflections as to my duties, and as to this mamma, so good, so generous," etc.; but the former reason is merely grotesque, and the latter is hardly compatible with his conduct.

Madame de Warens, we must remember, had some of his money in her hands. It was his money, not hers, that he had had so much difficulty in extracting from her. That was one clear reason for hurrying home to see what had happened in his absence. Jealousy of Wintzinried was another. For, though the *Confessions* give us to understand that Wintzinried had not yet crossed his path, the letters, at least by implication, tell quite another story. The rival is nowhere mentioned in them by name, but there is in Letter XVI. a clear reference to the new situation which his presence had created. In it Jean-Jacques, apropos of we know not what, assures Madame de Warens that he would sooner live with her in the humblest capacity than enjoy wealth and distinction apart from her; and he continues:—

"Grant me this, and everything else is a matter of ndifference to me. When a man thinks as I do, it s not difficult to evade the 'important reasons' which you do not wish to tell me. For God's sake arrange matters so that I need not die of despair. I approve of everything, I submit to everything except that one condition to which I feel it impossible to agree, even to escape the most miserable lot. Ah, my dear mamma! Are you no longer my dear mamma? Have I lived a few months too long? You know that there is one case in which I would accept your terms with all the joy of my heart, but that case is unique. You understand my meaning."

The meaning, indeed, can be understood without much difficulty. Madame de Warens, by exhorting Jean-Jacques to stay away, had made him anxious to return. He had been willing to divide her favours with Claude Anet; he was—or thought he was—unwilling to share them with the newcomer. He did not know everything, perhaps; but he feared, and suspected, and wanted to make sure, and to try his strength before accepting his defeat. So he now forgot Madame de Larnage, just as he had previously forgotten mamma. He wrote telling Madame de Warens to expect him, and he returned. And then, if we may believe the *Confessions*:—

"I arrive out of breath, having left my carriage in the town. No one is in the courtyard, or at the door, or at the window. I begin to feel anxious, and to fear that some accident has happened. I enter;

everything is quiet; some workpeople are eating in the kitchen, but no preparation has been made for me. The maid-servant seemed surprised to see me; she did not know that I was expected. I go upstairs, and at last I behold her, my dear mamma whom I loved so tenderly, so intensely, so purely. I run to her, and throw myself at her feet. 'Ah, there you are,' she said, embracing me. 'How are you? And did you have a pleasant journey?' This welcome checked me. I asked her if she had not received my letter, and she told me that she had. 'I should have supposed that you had not,' I replied; and there were no further explanations. A young man was with her. I recognised him, and remembered having seen him in the house before my departure. But this time he seemed to have settled down there for good, and so he had. In short, my place was taken."

Decidedly his place was taken. That is the one germ of truth which this portion of his narrative contains. But it is not true, as the correspondence has already shown us, that the presence of Wintzinried took Jean-Jacques by surprise; and it is not true, as the date of the lease has shown us, that the meeting took place at Les Charmettes as the dramatic culmination of an idyllic *solitude-à-deux*. It took place at Chambéry before the removal to Les Charmettes; and the Les Charmettes story—that pastoral interlude on which Jean-Jacques himself and all his biographers have dwelt with poetical eloquence and loving and sympathetic enthusiasm — needs to be rewritten in the hard, dry light of this discovery.

CHAPTER X

Jean-Jacques at Les Charmettes—His own version of the story—The true version—"No romance and no *solitude-à-deux*"—Jean Jacques alone in an Eveless Paradise—Quarrels with Wintzinried—Apologises to him—No truth in the narrative in the *Confessions*—The reason why Jean-Jacques called imagination to the aid of memory.

Everybody knows Les Charmettes from pictures and from Jean-Jacques' descriptions. It was—it still is—a white farmhouse with a red roof and green shutters, surrounded by a garden arranged in terraces and containing beehives and a dovecot. Adjacent, and forming a part of the property, were a small vineyard, a small orchard, a small clump of chestnut trees, and a plot of meadow land. Two cows, ten sheep, seven hens, and a cock were taken over from the landlord. All this, Jean Jacques tells us, for him—for the sake of his health, and for the sake of the *solitude-à-deux*. "Here," he proceeds, "the brief happiness of my life begins"; and he relates in detail the manner of his daily life.

He rose, he says, every morning, before dawn, and walked along the road that skirted the hillside, saying his prayers as he went. He returned to see whether Madame de Warens was yet awake, worked in the garden until she threw her shutters open, and then went to her room and kissed her while she lay in bed. They breakfasted together and chattered for

an hour or so, and then Jean-Jacques sat at his books until midday. In the interval before dinner he visited the pigeons and the bees. After dinner, when the weather permitted, they took their coffee in an arbour. A little later, study was resumed, though sometimes varied with the outdoor work of the farm; and in the evening Jean Jacques was in the garden again, astonishing his simple neighbours by taking astronomical observations.

That was the ordinary round; but there were also high days, and holidays, and picnics. We have an account of one picnic in particular among the woods on the opposite side of the valley:—

"We had sent our provisions on ahead, for it was to be a whole day's excursion. Mamma, though inclined to be stout, was not a bad walker. We rambled on from hill to hill, from wood to wood, sometimes in the sun and sometimes in the shade, sitting down now and then to rest, losing ourselves in forgetfulness for hours together, talking of ourselves, of our union, and the happiness of our lot, offering up prayers, not destined to be heard, that it might endure."

They dined in a peasant's chalet. After dinner, they lit a fire out of doors, and boiled the kettle, and made coffee which they drank in the shade of a chestnut tree; and Jean-Jacques was so happy that he was moved to tears:—

"In a melting transport of tenderness I embraced this dear friend of mine. 'Mamma, mamma,' I exclaimed passionately, 'this day of delight has long

been promised to me, and I do not look beyond it. Thanks to you, my happiness has reached its zenith. May it never decline! May it last as long as I continue to desire it! In that case, it will only cease with my death.'"

Nor was it only at such supreme moments that Jean-Jacques was ravished with delight. He was happy, he assures us, at all times and all seasons:—

"I rose at sunrise and was happy; I went for a walk and was happy; I saw mamma and was happy; I left her and was happy. I wandered through the woods, and on the hillsides, and in the valleys. I read and I was idle. I worked in the garden, I gathered the fruit, I helped in the house, and wherever I went happiness followed me. It was not happiness due to this or that. It was happiness the seat of which was in my own mind, and it never deserted me for an instant."

Such is the idyll. It has passed into literature as one of the world's most famous love stories. Whole books have been written about it. The scene of it is a place of sentimental pilgrimage, preserved as an historical monument at the public cost. Among the pilgrims whose signatures and sentiments are to be found in the visitors' book are included Lamartine, Berlioz, Louise Michel, Stendhal, Jules Janin, and MM. Saint-Saëns, Clemenceau, Octave Mirbeau, and Maurice Barrès. Arthur Young, long before any of these, had "viewed it with a degree of melancholy"; and Lord Morley has pictured the house "brood-

ing in forlorn isolation like some life-wearied beard over ancient and sorrow-stricken mem and felt it stirring "those inmost vibrations wh truth make up all the short divine part of a life." It seems a pity, and almost a shame, to d a legend consecrated by so many tributes quence; and yet there is no denying that little discovery about the date of the lease o Charmettes does make a world of difference.

The details—some of them, and perhaps good many of them—may be true, and cer cannot be disproved. It is credible enough Jean-Jacques tamed the pigeons—that he sa prayers out of doors—that he drank his coffe summerhouse—that the country-people took h a sorcerer when they saw him studying the con tions with the help of his planisphere. We nee throw any doubt upon the list of books which h us that he read: the *Port Royal Logic*, Locke's *on the Human Understanding*, the works of Leibnitz, Malebranche, and Descartes, and Banc *Cartella per musica*. All this may stand. Wh have to sacrifice is not the little points of fact bu pervading sentiment which was thought to colo facts and clothe them with beauty and poetry.

For it is not true that Jean-Jacques and Ma de Warens were lovers who fled from the world alone together. It is not even true that Les Ch ettes was taken for Jean-Jacques' benefit, becau was ill and Madame de Warens, watching him anxious affectionate eyes, decided that he n country air. It is not even true that he was con as to the removal to Les Charmettes, or probabl

he was intended to reside there. The negotiations for the hiring of the country house were conducted while he was in the South of France; and Madame de Warens, as we have seen, did her best to prevent him from returning. A greater than Jean-Jacques had arisen. His place was taken. The period during which, according to the *Confessions*, his happiness was supreme and unalloyed was also the period during which the blond and burly barber with the flat face and the flat mind was preferred to him. The romance at Les Charmettes was, from beginning to end, the romance of a man who had accepted that extraordinary situation.

He tells us himself how he accepted it, claiming no little credit for his conduct. Madame de Warens, it seems, had told him that the transference of her affections was only the natural result of his frequent absences from home:—

"'Oh, mamma,' I cried, my heart racked with agony. 'What is this that you dare to say to me! What a recompense is this for an attachment such as mine! I shall die of it, but you will regret that you have lost me.' She answered with a calm that nearly drove me mad, telling me that I was a child, that nobody died of troubles of that sort—that I should lose nothing—that we should be just as good friends as we had been before, and just as intimate in every sense of the word. . . . In fine, she gave me to understand that my own rights would be unimpaired, and that, though I must now share them with another, I should not for that reason be deprived of any privilege that I had enjoyed."

To which Jean-Jacques replied :—

"No, no, mamma. I love you too much to degrade you. The privilege of possessing you is too dear to me to be shared with another. The regrets which I felt when I acquired it have grown with my love. No, I cannot pay that price to preserve it. I shall always continue to adore; try always to be worthy of my adoration. It is to yourself, mamma, that I surrender you; it is to the union of our hearts that I sacrifice all my pleasures. Rather would I perish a thousand times than taste delights which would degrade the object of my affection."

The language is almost transpontine. It presents the illusion, if not the reality, of noble sentiments. One could pass it as an attempt at dignity in a farewell speech, though even so the impression would be somewhat undone by our knowledge that the speaker had so recently discovered "true pleasure" in the arms of another woman. Unfortunately, however, it is not a farewell speech. It is the speech which inaugurates the episode in Jean-Jacques' life commonly regarded as the most poetical and idyllic; and it falls with the force of a sledge-hammer upon the sentiment associated with that epoch, showing us through what circumstances Jean-Jacques adhered to his resolution never to desert Madame de Warens.

It is possible, of course, that the story is untrue and that the reported words were never spoken. It is quite possible that the favours which Jean-Jacques represents himself as declining with indignation were not on this occasion offered to him. In the

absence of evidence we can only balance probabilities. But indeed it hardly matters. The essentials of the position remain, on either theory, the same. There was no romance at Les Charmettes, and no *solitude-à-deux*. Jean-Jacques had been Madame de Warens' lover, and had stooped to become her friend, remaining her dependent, and continuing to eat her bread, though she had little enough of it to spare—a tolerated intruder lingering in a paradise that was not for him.

He must have been a strange man if he felt happy and comfortable, living in such conditions; and, as he was now six-and-twenty, it is as a man and not as a boy that we must now think of him. All the evidence that we have goes to show that humiliations were put upon him and that both Madame de Warens and Wintzinried were eager to get rid of him. The former did her best to find him employment that would take him away from her; M. de Conzié tells us that she tried to persuade him to become a doctor. Of Wintzinried he always speaks with dislike; and, when we check the *Confessions* by the letters, we find that he quarrelled with Wintzinried, and that Madame de Warens took Wintzinried's part and made Jean-Jacques apologise. Here is the apology, dated March 18, 1739:—

"I have considered the matter and come to the conclusion that since you thought I was in the wrong, I must indeed have been so; and so, without trying to quibble, I have begged my brother's pardon, and I also very humbly beg yours. You promised to forgive me at Easter . . . but it is impossible that things have come to such a point that religious motives are needed for our reconciliation."

Presumably she did forgive; but it hardly m
whether she did or not. The romance was
beyond the possibility of re-establishment by p
It was so completely dead that, by this time, M
de Warens was living with Wintzinried in
her houses while Jean Jacques was left alone
other. That is another blow to the legend whi
faithful biographer is bound to strike. All
Jacques' talk about his migrations with Mada
Warens, to and fro, to and fro, according to the se
between Les Charmettes and Chambéry, has on
slightest, if it has any, foundation in fact. M
de Warens and Wintzinried must sometimes have
to and fro; but it was seldom that they took
Jacques with them. During the whole of the
of 1738–1739 they left him at Les Charmettes,
with his books in an Eveless Paradise. M. de C
saw him then, and relates that Jean-Jacques disp
"a decided taste for solitude, an innate contem
men, and a resolute inclination to censure their
and weaknesses." That is our final proof th
story of Les Charmettes, as he tells it, is a ba
fabric,—a legend, and, one may almost say, a li

Why did he build the legend? Why d
invent the lie? It is an interesting speculation
the quest of an answer is not, perhaps, quite hop

He can hardly have lied because he was as
of the truth. He made so many shameful
fessions that it is impossible to believe tha
more would have made any difference to his bl
Moreover, if he had been ashamed of the fa
would have been easy for him to conceal
altogether instead of misrepresenting them; if h

not spoken, no one would ever have known, and he was under no obligation to speak. But he was vain as well as shameless, though his vanity did not run quite on the same lines as other men's. His vanity always prompted him to make excuses for his most discreditable actions; but it also made him keenly sensitive to certain troubles, and painfully conscious of certain failures.

Let us anticipate, for a moment, and consider the conditions in which the *Confessions* were begun. Jean-Jacques was then an invalid and an exile, living in concubinage with an ignorant woman of humble station in a remote village of the Jura. His life's work was finished; his celebrity was world-wide; but he had no occupation to interest him—nothing to do but to dwell among the phantom figures of the past, recalling old hopes and early aspirations, asking himself which, if any, of his ambitions had been realised.

Fame indeed had crowned him beyond his wildest expectations; and fame could console him for the loss of much that he had missed. But the dream of his youth had been not of fame but of romance. Philosophy had been nothing to him then. He had become a philosopher almost by accident—almost in spite of himself, philosophising with his heart rather than with his head. But he had been the true precursor and parent of the Romantic School in this—that he had preached the gospel of "happiness in love" as earnestly as the saints preach the gospel of happiness in religion. So far as preaching went, neither Madame de Staël nor George Sand had much to learn from him.

He had preached, but he had not practised; he

had tried to practise, but he had failed. Both G
Sand and Madame de Staël could look back
golden age of however brief duration, in whic
had indeed yielded all that could be asked fr
Jean-Jacques could not. Women had som
helped him to succeed in life; women had som
thrown themselves at his head. He had play
rôle of Adonis in the arms of Venus and of Jos
the house of Potiphar; he had also bought th
that was for sale in the houses of ill fam
had waxed sentimental over the bargain. But n
had come of it all. It was not merely that
tired of the women, or that the women had t
him. It was rather that he had never succeed
lifting intrigue to the level of romance. H
enduring liaison had been with a servant-gi
could neither read nor write, and was prese
give him a rival in the person of a groom.
women who had pursued him with their att
had been chambermaids, like Merceret, or trade
wives, like Mesdames Basile and Lard. The
ladies whom he had courted had either amused
selves with him like Madame d'Houdetot or
him the door like Madame Dupin. There ha
no supreme moment to which he could look
with supreme satisfaction, saying to himsel
nothing else mattered seeing that then at least
lived and loved.

He was in such a mood, as we shall see pre
when Madame d'Houdetot found him and fas
him. It is impossible not to believe that the
recurred when he sat down to write his remini
in the solitude of the Val de Travers. Rev

his life and his various adventures, sentimental and other—contrasting his experiences, it may be, with those of other men—he understood, when too late, what he had missed, and felt the need of some memory on which his mind could dwell with loving and luxurious regret. He would be satisfied to be miserable in the present if only he could remember that he had been ideally happy in the past; and there was only one way of achieving this—by calling imagination to the aid of memory.

That, there seems no room for doubt, is what he did. He lied not so much to the world as to himself. Ashamed of the thought that he, the author of the most popular love story of his age, had never himself known happiness in love, he let his fancy manipulate old recollections, piece them together, alter them, and touch them up, until he was half persuaded that things had really happened as he dreamed—a curious anticipation, in the realm of sentiment, of George IV.'s delusion that he had charged with the Guards at Waterloo.

The idyll of Les Charmettes is the result. It is an enchanting picture, poetically conceived and embellished with the artistic touches of a master—a picture worthy of Watteau and full of the sentiment of Watteau, bound to go straight to the hearts of a generation weary of eighteenth-century artificialities and hankering after *une douce émotion* and the simple life. But it is the picture of a poet bent upon self-deception, not of a faithful witness to fact. The date of the lease and the contents of the correspondence demonstrate that, local colour apart, there is not a word of truth in it.

CHAPTER XI

Alone at Les Charmettes — A course of reading — A begging letter — A poem — A tutorship at Lyons — In love with Suzanne Serre — Jean Jacques resigns his tutorship and returns to Chambéry — His cold reception there — He decides to go to Paris.

THE truth about Les Charmettes is that Jean-Jacques was banished, to be out of the way when he was not wanted. He shivered there alone through the winter—a cast-off lover who had become a hanger-on, bidden, when unsubmissive, to ask the pardon of the barber who had supplanted him. All poetry, together with all dignity, disappears from the picture when we realise these facts.

He was seven-and-twenty, and he remained with Madame de Warens on sufferance; while she, already reduced to raising ready money by mortgaging her pension, was trying to find him something to do. Apparently he was himself looking for employment, though in an intermittent, desultory, and dreamy way. Senebier, the public librarian of Geneva, tells us in his *Histoire littéraire de Genève* that he submitted to the King of Sardinia a proposal to organise and direct a regular service of diligences linking the principal towns of his dominions. One sees the practical mind of Madame de Warens pretty clearly in that project; but it came to nothing, and her next

measure was to try to seek her protégé a tutorship. She could not discover anything of the sort quite at once, and Jean-Jacques continued to hang on, lamenting the feebleness of his health, acquiring that taste for solitude and that contempt for humanity of which M. de Conzié speaks, reading a great deal, and making his first attempts in composition.

We know pretty well what he read, though it is not so easy to decide what good he got from it. It is clear at any rate that he was rather a miscellaneous reader than a systematic student. He worried his way through an Encyclopædia; he turned from geometry to Jansenist theology; he enjoyed Voltaire, and perused many volumes of moral, mental, and metaphysical philosophy. But he took the philosophers, as it were, for granted and at their own valuation, neither resisting their conclusions nor trying to reconcile them or to decide between them when they were at variance, but merely filling his head, as he says, with their ideas, or, as seems more intrinsically probable, with their phrases. In the end, he considers, this practice prepared him to think for himself; but our verdict upon that claim will depend upon what we mean by thinking. It is a question, indeed, whether Jean-Jacques ever thought at all—whether he ever realised the difference between assertion and demonstration, or between prejudice and conviction—whether his arguments ever amounted to more than the rhetorical expression of a personality—whether it was not because he gave philosophic speciousness to random declamation that the men of the Revolution hailed him as a prophet. At Les Charmettes, at any rate, Jean-Jacques was not

a philosopher or anything remotely resembling a philosopher, but merely a general reader who wrote a little to relieve his tedium.

He wrote a tragedy which he burnt, and a comedy which has survived; but his principal composition was a begging letter: a memorandum to the Governor of Savoy, in which he respectfully solicited a pension.

There was no reason why he should have a pension—except that he wanted one. He had rendered no public services giving him a claim upon the public purse; he was merely, as the vulgar say, "trying it on"—no doubt at the instigation of Madame de Warens, who had "tried it on" successfully herself. The petition was submitted to Madame de Warens, and she revised it. It is no more veracious than the generality of documents of the kind; on the whole, perhaps, it is rather less so.

"I left Geneva very young," says Jean-Jacques, "abandoning my rights to enter the bosom of the Church." He left Geneva, as we know, to escape a thrashing, changed his religion for the sake of the loaves and fishes, and had quite recently received his share of his mother's property. "Falling," he continues, "into the hands of the late Bishop of Geneva, I tried to justify this respectable prelate's flattering estimation of me by the ardour and assiduity of my studies." He had, in fact, as we have seen, been dismissed from the Annecy Seminary as idle and incapable. "I experience to-day," he proceeds, "the hard ingratitude of persons in instructing whom I have worn myself out." He had, as he admits in the *Confessions*, exhausted the patience of his pupils by his unpunctuality. Concerning his health he adds:

"I am suffering from a frightful illness which disfigures me. I live in confinement, unable to leave my room or my bed until it shall please God to put an end to my brief but miserable life." But this was an old story, revived *ad misericordiam*, of an accident from which he had recovered, and Jean-Jacques was quite able to be up and doing when inclination and convenience prompted him. In fact, the only quite true statements contained in the petition are to the effect that he was "not devoid of talent" and that he was "dependent upon Madame de Warens."

As a voucher apparently for these latter statements, he enclosed a poem entitled *Le verger des Charmettes*. It is long, relatively to its purpose, and it is bad. It contains a rhyming list of the poet's favourite authors together with glowing panegyrics of his King and his protectress. This sort of thing :—

"Wise Warens whom the royal funds sustain,
Slander assails you secretly in vain.
Be not afraid of it or its effects;
The shield of virtue guards you and protects.
The King respects your zeal, for he has heard
That you are always loyal to his word.
His favour is assured—be not afraid;
Your own heart tells you you deserve his aid."

And also this :—

"So this my days are passed in quietness;
I shed no tears because of my distress.
If I have sometimes wept and missed repose
That is for other reasons than my woes.
In vain do misery and pain and fear
Discourage this, the end of my career.

Like Epictetus I've a Stoic's pride,
And poverty and suffering I deride.
Despite my languor and my failing breath,
I feel no qualms at the approach of death.
The pains that penetrate my being's core
Make me more virtuous than I was before."

Let that suffice. The English rendering reads perhaps like a parody of a University prize poem. The French original is not less pompous, otiose, and clumsy—and it was no more practically efficacious than poetically meritorious. The pension which Jean-Jacques sought with false pretences in his begging letter was not accorded to him. His way out was to take a tutorship procured for him by Madame de Warens in the family of M. de Mably[1] at Lyons.

He held it for a year; and he was a failure from every point of view, though he appears to have embarked on the career with pedantically noble intentions.

"It is true" (he writes in a preliminary letter to a friend who had acted as intermediary in the negotiations) "that I have tried to do justice to the pains which my dear mamma, Madame de Warens, has taken to push me forward in the path of culture; but the principles which I profess have often caused me to cultivate the sentiments of the heart at the expense of my intellectual talents, and I have been far more anxious to hold right opinions than to acquire extensive knowledge. Nevertheless, sir, even in this respect I will make the most

[1] Brother of the more famous publicist, Abbé de Mably.

strenuous efforts to warrant your favourable estimate of my qualifications; and I regard all the kind things that you have said of me only as a polite exhortation to fulfil to the best of my ability the honourable engagement which you have been good enough to contract in my name."

That was the promise; and it is added in the *Confessions* that Madame de Mably undertook to try to teach the tutor the "manners and tone of good society." Unfortunately, however, the performance lagged behind the promise, and the manners and tone of good society were but imperfectly acquired. Jean-Jacques could not keep the boys in order; and he made love to his employer's wife, and stole his employer's wine, which he guzzled in secret in his bedroom.

The love-making came to nothing because Madame de Mably snubbed him. The pilferings and the potations were brought to light by the discovery of a row of empty bottles; but M. de Mably "took," as Jean-Jacques says, "an honest and prudent course." He said nothing, but he removed the key of the cellar from the tutor's custody. "My sense of his indulgence," says Jean-Jacques, "increased my attachment to him, and caused me to remain in his service longer than I should otherwise have done"—a curious manifestation truly of a humble and contrite spirit, specially striking in the case of a philosopher who lived to be proud above all things of his pride.

Very possibly, however, there was another reason for the prolongation of his stay; and if we "look for the woman," we shall find that her name was

Suzanne Serre. Jean-Jacques had met her before, and he was to meet her again; but this must have been his chief opportunity of cultivating her acquaintance. We hardly know who she was, and it is quite impossible to make out any connected story of Jean-Jacques' relations with her. As usual, the Correspondence and the *Confessions* rather contradict than supplement each other. It is clear, however, that there were love passages, and even that the question of marriage was mooted, though it remains uncertain whether Jean-Jacques was a rejected lover or one who could not be brought to the point:—

"My heart" (we read in the *Confessions*) "was captivated. I had some reason to believe that hers was not indifferent to me. The confidence which she reposed in me disarmed any intention which I might have had of abusing it. She had no money, nor had I; our positions were too similar for us to join our fortunes; and mine was such as to put marriage out of the question for me. She told me that a young tradesman, M. Genève, had shown an inclination for her. I met him once or twice at her house. He seemed an honourable man, and was said to be so. Confident that he would make her happy, I wished him to marry her, as he ultimately did; and, in order that I might not be an obstacle to their innocent affections, I made haste to depart."

That is one version of the story. We find another in one of the Rousseau manuscripts in the

Library at Neuchâtel[1]—a fragment apparently of a rough draft of the *Confessions*, discarded but not destroyed. From that scrap of paper we are able to infer that Jean-Jacques and Suzanne took some excursion together, and that, in the course of it, Suzanne offered Jean-Jacques her heart and hand, which he did not see his way to accept. This is the conclusive passage:—

"Her affection for me seemed to be redoubled in the course of our journey. I found her caresses sweeter and more tender than before; and my poor heart, always full of sensibility, met the proofs of her attachment half-way.

"She said to me, 'We are good friends, aren't we?' 'Yes,' I answered, 'and we might have been still better friends. Ah! how passionately I should have loved you. But, for that, five conditions would have been requisite, and the easiest of them is impossible.'

"Her demonstrations were arrested, and she made no reply. That was natural enough. What was not so natural was the look in her eyes that accompanied her silence—a look which I shall never forget and which I am quite unable to describe. At that very moment . . .

"This almost imperceptible movement repelled my heart for ever."

The picture there is of a lover who, from prudential considerations, saves his mistress from herself; but the one letter from Jean-Jacques to

[1] Published by M. Jansen.

Suzanne which has escaped destruction sl
different light upon the incident. The love
there of his mistress's "incredible cruelty" and
own "despair." He is doomed, he says, to
eternally," and is well aware that he must not l
see his love returned, because he is "a youn
without fortune and with nothing to offer t
heart." Moreover, he has rivals:—

"I have positive information that you ha
liaisons with other men; I even know the n
the fortunate individual who was able to persua
to listen to his suit; and I may say, in order
you an idea of my way of looking at these n
that, though I learnt it by accident and
going out of my way to discover it, my
for you will never suffer me to seek to as
anything about your conduct which you do n
to tell me yourself."

And then he asks for an appointment, addi

"Heaven pardons the faults which we
involuntarily. Do not be more severe than H
but make allowances for my invincible pass
passion which carries me, in spite of myself, t
a point that if I were permitted to posse
adorable queen for a minute on condition of
hanged a quarter of an hour afterwards, I
accept the offer with more joy than that of the
of the Universe."

Decidedly one does not gather from tha
Jean-Jacques' intentions were what the worl

"honourable." One gathers rather that he wished, and tried, to seduce the mistress of another man. We may be quite sure that if he had succeeded, he would have told us so; while as to the nature of Suzanne's intimacy with her more favoured lover, we have conclusive evidence in the Lyons Register of Marriages. When M. Genève married her, in spite of the opposition of his parents, the wedded couple "recognised" a child which had been born to them about three months before.

That was the end of that romance, which does not seem to have been so very romantic after all. After it had begun, but before it had reached its culmination, Jean-Jacques threw up his tutorship and once more returned to Madame de Warens.

He had continued in correspondence with her, though we do not know to what extent. He had helped her to raise money by selling a piece of silver plate; she, on her part, had made him a present of a set of night shirts. Those are the only facts discoverable; they amount to nothing and account for nothing. Assuredly they do not constitute a reason for returning. One can only suppose that Jean-Jacques left Lyons because his turbulent pupils made his life a burden, and went to Les Charmettes because he had nowhere else to go; and even so one is left wondering why, in the circumstances, he should have expected that Madame de Warens would be glad to see him. But he did expect it; and, of course, he was disappointed :—

"Alas! for the terrible deceptions of human life; she received me with the kindness of heart which

could only leave her with her life; but I had
looking for the past, which had ceased to b
could never be again. Hardly had I been h
hour with her than I perceived that the old hap
was dead for ever."

Naturally—he might have known that it
be so. Naturally, too, it was painful to him,
says, to be "a supernumerary in a house in wh
had once been all in all"—and that also w
embarrassment which he might have foreseen.
anticipation would have been a very good reas
staying away; the realisation would have been
good reason for departing as quickly as he had
And there were other reasons, of a less person
not less urgent character, pointing to the same c
Madame de Warens' pecuniary embarrassments
increasing:—

"Her pension was spent before it was
future instalments of it were hypothecated; th
was in arrears; debts were rapidly accumulating

Assuredly the moment was inopportune f
entertainment of an unwelcome guest who di
pay for his board; but these considerations di
move Jean-Jacques. Or perhaps one should sa
they moved him without causing him to mov
sense of helplessness may have detained him;
may have clung surlily to what he regarded
vested interests. At all events, on his own sho
he sulked, but did not stir. He was "given o
the blackest melancholy"; he "lived alone exc

meal-times"; he "felt in advance all the horrors" of Madame de Warens' impending bankruptcy. But he did no work, and continued to live at her charge, shutting himself up in his "beloved study," reading up the theory of music. Not until he had invented a new system of musical notation, which he was persuaded would make his fortune in Paris, did he cut himself adrift from his moorings in Savoy and plunge into the struggle for life.

CHAPTER XII

Jean-Jacques' relations with Madame de Warens—Was she really his mistress?—The evidence and the probabilities—Jean-Jacques' new theory of musical notation—Arrival in Paris—Advice of the Jesuit father: "Go and see the women"—Visit to Mesdames de Beuzenval and de Broglie—Invitation to dine in the servants' hall—Introduction to Madame Dupin—Jean-Jacques makes love to her—Her "visible disgust"—Jean-Jacques apologises to her husband—Appointed secretary to the Comte de Montaigu, French Ambassador at Venice.

THE pedestrian period was over. Jean-Jacques did not walk to Paris but drove; and he broke his journey at Lyons, where he sold his books, wound up his liaison with Mlle Serre, and collected some letters of introduction. It is the moment to pause and inspect him, and consider what manner of man he had so far succeeded in becoming.

The date was 1741, so that his age was twenty-nine. It would be too much to say that he had never done a day's work in his life; but he had at any rate only earned his living for brief periods at rare intervals. Even his father had been shocked by the levity with which he threw up his successive occupations, and deplored his inability to "establish" himself in some definite and honourable calling. He had been in turn footman, secretary, clerk, theological student, teacher of music, and private tutor in an

ratic family, and had in almost every case
d his work, or tired of it, or proved unfit for it.
y, and for most of the time, he had been a
dent on the bounty of Madame de Warens ; and
l also been her paramour—or so he says.
may be that he has told the truth in this
ılar. It may be, and also it may not. We
is word for it but we have no scrap of con-
ory evidence. His letters to her—those of
that have been preserved—are much more
son's letters to his mother than a lover's to
stress. There is no such masculine passion in
f them as we find in the solitary letter to
ne Serre. Nor do any of our few witnesses
events of this period of his life appear to have
aware of the intrigue of which he speaks.
ly M. de Conzié says nothing of it ; and M. de
knew him rather well.
l this is decidedly suspicious, seeing that it was
acques' habit to kiss and tell—not merely to
ng afterwards but also to tell at the time. He
no mystery, as we shall discover, of his relations
Thérèse Le Vasseur or of his unavailing passion
adame d'Houdetot. It was not to the readers of
nfessions but to his friends and contemporaries
e first acknowledged his practice of depositing
mate children in the Foundling Hospital. It is
o believe that he was, exceptionally, intimate
Madame de Warens and reticent about his in-
. It is tempting to conjecture that he lied in
atter for the satisfaction of the vanity of his
e, just as we know that he lied in poeticising
cumstances of his life at Les Charmettes.

Yet the conjecture falls short of certainty; and there are arguments against it. M. de Conzié may have known but have kept his own counsel, being a gentleman, whereas Jean-Jacques was not. Or else Jean-Jacques may have been too timid and shy to talk at first, and too much ashamed to talk afterwards and let it be known that Wintzinried had usurped his place. And he may also have had a certain awe of Madame de Warens which made his letters, in spite of his privileges, a pattern of humility. Such considerations would have little weight if his story were less circumstantial. But it is so very circumstantial that they tend to turn the scale; and one inclines to think that she must have been his mistress as he says, but so little—oh, so very little—and for so very short a time. And he, on his part, it is very clear, had never been in love with her and had considered her favours a matter of quite secondary importance. His attachment had been for the house rather than for the mistress of the house. He had found his "escape from life" there, albeit in undignified conditions. He had stayed there as long as he could, maundering, meditating, dreaming, reading; but now it was all over. He had become uncomfortable there; and so he sallied forth to take his part in the struggle.

Let it be repeated that he was not yet a philosopher, or anything remotely resembling a philosopher. He was as little a philosopher as he was a gentleman, and he was hardly even a scholar. He was well read but not well educated. The verse which he had written was mere doggerel, and the prose was not much better; the only subject to which he had

y given thought was music. He had no glimmer-
as yet of any anti-social theories—no sense of
t against the injustices and inequalities of the
l. He accepted things as they were, and the
l as his oyster which he would open by means of
etters of introduction and his new system of
cal notation.

That was his status morally and intellectually.
ally, he was the young man from the country
a philosophy of conduct which he did not quite
how to put in practice, a sentimental and in-
nable "Bel-Ami," handicapped by ignorance of
sages of polite society. From his childhood he
always been fond of building romantic castles in
ir, and he had not ceased to build them. His
thought, when he gained a footing in a new
e, was to make love to the mistress of it; he
a passion for romance, and that seemed the
ntic thing to do. At the same time he expected
omances to be of practical utility. He wanted
arrive" by the favour of women, because that
ed the romantic way of arriving.

Undoubtedly he had some of the qualifications
ollowing this course—some of them, but not all.
bite his faults, he was an engaging and attractive
h. He made friends easily with men as well as
women. They were willing to help him, to
him forward, to recommend him to each other.
was naive and unusual; he paid new compliments
new and timid style, and he had strangely
tiful eyes. Hence his opportunities of behaving
y and the forgiveness accorded to him when he
ehaved. He meant no harm, it was felt, and

knew no better. He must be given time to live and learn. Meanwhile he must be let down gently and helped over the awkward social stiles.

He arrived in Paris, he tells us, with fifteen louis in his pocket, and nothing else but his comedy and his system of musical notation to fall back upon. But "a presentable young man of talent is always sure to be well received there", and no doubt such a youth had a better chance in those days than in these. Society was a small body which found its recreation in brilliant talk, and looked to men of talent to entertain it. The men of letters formed a still smaller body—there may have been about a dozen of them all told—and were consequently in request without much reference to their birth and antecedents. Society received Diderot, in spite of the fact that he was the son of a cutler and the husband of a milliner, and d'Alembert, though he was a foundling brought up by a glazier's widow. There was no reason why doors that were open to them should be closed in the face of Jean-Jacques; and his musical talents helped him.

His system of musical notation did not, indeed, satisfy the Committee of the Academy which considered it, and there is therefore no good reason for stopping to examine it in this place. No doubt, however, the mere fact that it received consideration caused its author to be talked about in both musical and intellectual circles, especially as he was at the same time giving lessons in harmony and composition to some young men with good connections. His chance was bound to come; the rest would depend upon himself.

His opportunity was given to him by a Jesuit, Père Castel, whom he knew through the introduction of M. de Mably :—

"Père Castel" (his story goes) "was quite mad, but a good fellow none the less. It distressed him to see me wasting my time without arriving at any result. 'Since the musicians and the scholars do nothing for you,' he said, 'change your tune, and go and see the women. Perhaps you will succeed better with them. I have mentioned you to Madame de Beuzenval. Call on her and tell her that you come from me. She is an excellent woman, and will be glad to see a fellow-countryman of her husband and her son. At her house you will meet her daughter, Madame de Broglie, who is a woman of wit and intelligence. Madame Dupin is another woman to whom I have frequently spoken of you. Take your work to her. She is anxious to see you, and will welcome you. Nothing is to be done in Paris without the help of women. They are, as it were, the curves of which wise men are the asymptotes.'"

We need not pause to inquire whether the advice was good or whether it came well from an ecclesiastic. It was not, we may be certain, the advice but the recommendations that Jean-Jacques had been waiting for. Now he had got what he wanted, and was launched, as he fancied, as an earlier Bel-Ami. It only remained to be seen what he would be able to make of the part; and he played it, as it proved, with curiously contradictory results, making himself ridiculous in it, and yet achieving a success. He

quickened no woman's pulse by his romantic airs. Women melted before his pleadings not into love but into good-nature. They first laughed at him, and then interested their influential friends in him.

There is more comedy than he seems to realise in his story of his visit to Mesdames de Beuzenval and de Broglie. They began by inviting him to dine in the servants' hall; then, when he excused himself on the ground of a prior engagement, they explained that he had misunderstood them, and that they wished him to dine at their own table. He accepted because he thought "it would be foolish to put on airs," and because he was "interested" in the younger of the two ladies. Conscious that he did not shine in small talk and persiflage, he drew a poem of his own composition from his pocket and read it to the company. It is a very bad poem, but they wept over the pathos of it; and when the author took his leave, Madame de Broglie made him a present of a little book of etiquette—"a Mentor," she said, "which you will find useful in your way through the world." Her purpose, he thinks, was to instruct him in the etiquette of gallantry in which she judged him worthy to shine and capable of shining, though to the impartial observer the action seems more like a stroke of irony. Irony or not, however, she set to work to find him an opening in life; and there could be no stronger proof of Jean-Jacques' personal charm than this—that an acquaintance which commenced with an invitation to dine with the servants ended with an introduction to an Ambassador in need of a secretary.

Meanwhile Jean-Jacques had been to call on Madame Dupin; and in her house too he blundered.

and lived down his blunder, and even turned it to his profit.

She was a great lady, rich and beautiful, and intelligent, not quite of the highest aristocracy but on terms of friendship with them, the wife of a farmer of the taxes. Jean-Jacques, the young man from the country, was to her a negligible nobody on whom she could look down with condescension from sublime heights of grandeur. Though he came as a stranger, it was not worth her while to make any careful toilette —or any toilette at all— for his reception. She received him while in the act of dressing, "with her arms bare, her hair undone, her dressing-gown carelessly arranged." To another stranger the lack of ceremony might have seemed to imply indifference and disdain. Jean-Jacques took it as a compliment, and an invitation.

He was pathetically anxious to do the right thing in the novel circumstances. Probably he consulted Madame de Broglie's manual of the etiquette of gallantry and took a hint from that. It told him— we cannot doubt that it told him—that the correct course, in such a case, was to make love; that women expected it and thought men fools if they did not seize such opportunities. And no doubt the cynical counsel was sound enough in the conditions to which it was intended to apply—given, that is to say, the right woman and the right man and an equality of social status. Only that equality did not subsist between Madame Dupin and Jean-Jacques, and the advice in consequence was not intended to apply to him.

Evidently he more than half suspected this, but

strenuously argued down his instinctive appr
sions. His whole attitude was that of a man
difficult duty to perform, afraid of himself, letti
dare not" wait upon "I would," but screwi
courage with painful effort to the sticking-point
"used," he says, "and even abused" the pern
to call. He "called nearly every day, and di
the house two or three times a week." Bu
availed him nothing. Perhaps Madame
supposed that he was hungry and needed her di
probably, in that case, she was kind-hearte
said to herself that he was welcome to t
especially as he was so nicely mannered.
than that she did not suspect; more tha
he did not dare to tell her—at all events by w
mouth. But he felt his social and romantic
tions, and he must discharge them somehow.
his duty, according to the manual of etiquette,
in love, and he was fully persuaded in his ow
that he had done so. If he was too nervous to
he was not too nervous to write; and so he wr

And then?

Well, then Jean-Jacques was quickly gi
understand that the prescriptions of the ma
etiquette were not for him—that he had alt
forgotten himself and had presumed unwarra
Madame Dupin, he says, "kept my letter f
days without even referring to it. On the thi
she handed it back to me, adding a few w
verbal exhortation in frigid tones that fro
blood." An alternative version of the story
sents her as leaving the room as an intima
him to leave the house; but the discrepancy i

Madame Dupin

Drawn & Engraved by Sartain

importance. And on the heels of that first rebuff a second followed. Madame Dupin's stepson, M. de Francueil, who had admired Jean-Jacques' musical talents and played duets with him, requested him to be less pointed in his attentions to his stepmother, and not to knock at her door so frequently.

Most young men from the country would have felt crushed by such rebukes. Not so Jean-Jacques. He had done wrong, but he could apologise; and he did so. He apologised not only to the lady but to her husband. He not only apologised to the husband, but implored him to use his influence with his wife to induce her to pardon the offence and restore the offender to favour. The apologies were discovered among Madame Dupin's papers[1] after her death, and are couched in language of extreme and even cringing humility.

"Madame Dupin's visible disgust for me" (Jean-Jacques wrote) "is a misfortune which causes me more pain than astonishment. I can foresee your own, and can therefore spare you the annoyance of giving me any proof of it, and myself the despair of displeasing a benefactor for whom my heart feels no sentiments but those of respect, gratitude, and attachment."

He knows, he adds, that he has only been treated as he deserved; but he is very sorry and he will never do it again :—

[1] *Le porte-feuille de Madame Dupin.* Lettres et œuvres inedites de Madame Dupin. Publié par le Comte de Villeneuve-Guibert.

"Great as my misconduct and my errors have been, at least I hold them in aversion. Sometimes we are able to make such amendment for our faults that our case is better than if we had not committed them. If such mistakes as mine seem to you to merit some little indulgence, then I beg for your indulgence and that of Madame Dupin. If only she can bring herself to endure the sight of me, that will suffice to make me labour to make my presence tolerable to her. My talents, I admit, are very limited; but there are other means by which an honest man can earn regard and respect and even make himself useful, and I shall make it my one object to do this. Having no ambition and no interest to serve, and no desire to shine, I shall look for my happiness solely in meriting your confidence and kindness, and that of Madame Dupin. I am saying nothing that does not faithfully mirror the thoughts in the depths of my soul. Judge me by that, and deign to accord me a word in reply.—I have the honour to be with respect, sir, your very humble and obedient servant,

"J.-J. Rousseau."

It is a pity that M. Dupin's answer, if he wrote one, is missing. Madame Dupin, as is evident from her actions, was moved. She was a woman of the world, and could see, quite as clearly as we can, that she had to do, not with a guilty passion, but with a *gaffe*. Jean-Jacques' blunder had been silly, but not unpardonable. Having blushed for it, he could be forgiven—especially as, when all was said, he was a very nice young man. So she unbent,

and even reached out a helping hand, offering Jean-Jacques temporary employment as tutor to her son, M. de Chenonceaux, and subsequently providing him with secretarial work.

For the moment, however, he did not, as it happened, need her help. Another helping female hand had been extended. Madame de Broglie had also been exerting her influence, and Jean-Jacques had been offered the post of secretary to the Comte de Montaigu, French Ambassador at Venice.

CHAPTER XIII

At Venice—The quarrel with the Ambassador—Jean-
version—The Ambassador's version. Did the Amb
threaten to throw him out of the window?—Corresp
with Madame de Warens—Relations with Venetian co
—"La Padoana"—Jean Jacques' sentimental refle
Anticipation of the point of view of the Romantic
—Purchase of a mistress—Return to Paris.

JEAN-JACQUES' view of the value of the se
which he rendered to France while at the
Embassy differed materially from that o
Ambassador. The secretary's unfavourable
on the Ambassador has long been before the
in the *Confessions*. The Ambassador's unf
able report on the secretary was only dug
the family archives by one of his desce
in 1904;[1] and the Venetian episode, lik
Charmettes episode, has, to some extent, to
written in the fresh light which the new doc
throws upon it.

The secretary has represented himself as
thing more than the faithful servant of a
incompetent diplomat. He figures in his ow
complacent narrative almost as the power
the throne. He tells us that, to all intent

[1] *Dimêlés du Comte de Montaigu, ambassadeur à V
de son Secrétaire Jean-Jacques Rousseau.* Par Aug
Montaigu.

purposes, he "ran" the Embassy, composing dispatches and disentangling imbroglios on his own initiative—that enemies intrigued against him—that he was treated with injustice and ingratitude, subjected to social indignities, threatened with personal violence, and robbed of the stipend which he had earned. But we have here, as it seems, a great deal of fiction embroidered upon a very scanty foundation of fact. It is not necessary to go into all the details in order to arrive at the substantial truth.

What is clear at the outset is that Jean-Jacques, puffed up with pride, magnified the importance of his office, both at the time and afterwards. He pictures himself as Secretary of the Embassy—a functionary of the French State. Secretaries of Embassies were in those days unknown to the French Foreign Office; and he was not the public servant of the State, but the private servant of M. de Montaigu. Possibly M. de Montaigu was indolent, and finding his secretary intelligent, flattered him by leaving him a free hand in matters which ought to have received his personal attention. Jean-Jacques assuredly was not the man to make the least of such opportunities of vainglorious self-assertion. His own narrative gives us the impression of a young man unduly conscious of his own importance strutting through Venice like a peacock. The measure of his pretensions is given by the nature of his complaints. A box at the Opera was always at his service, but he accepted that favour as a matter of course. He wanted also a private gondola at the Ambassador's cost; he complained

that the plate and linen supplied for the table at which he supped were not sufficiently luxurious, though the bill for the plate, preserved in the family archives, shows that the plate had cost 230 francs. Finally, he made a scene because the Ambassador did not invite him to dine at his own table to meet the Duke of Modena, protesting that "etiquette and immemorial usage" entitled him to the invitation—which is nonsense.

Probably, however, the real clue to the ultimate disagreement is to be found in none of these matters, but in the company which Jean-Jacques frequented. He cultivated the French residents and made enemies among the Italians; whereas it was his business to conciliate the latter and avoid such of the former as had left their country for their country's good. Hence jealousies and intrigues and strained relations concerning which it is unnecessary to particularise. Matters reached their head when Jean-Jacques wrote to the Ambassador's brother, the Chevalier de Montaigu, at Paris, to complain of the treatment he was receiving. The Chevalier then wrote to the Ambassador, and the Ambassador summoned the secretary to his study, and "foamed at the mouth with rage." Jean-Jacques' version of the incident continues:—

"He made as if he would summon his servants to throw me, as he threatened, out of the window. Up to that point I had been very calm; but then I, in my turn, was overcome with anger and indignation. I rushed to the door and drew the bolt which closed it. 'No, no, M. le Comte,' I said, approaching him

with grave and measured steps. 'Your attendants shall not be mixed up in this affair. It is a matter to be settled between you and me.' My action and my manner quieted him in a moment; he was visibly astonished and alarmed. When I saw that he had recovered from his frenzy, I wished him farewell in few words. Then, without awaiting his reply, I opened the door and walked out, passing with slow deliberation through the ante-chamber, where his attendants rose as usual. . . . Then, without going up to my own room, I descended the stairs and left the palace, never to set foot in it again."

Decidedly Jean-Jacques assigns himself the *beau rôle* in this encounter. He adds that the Ambassador refused to settle his accounts and threatened to have him chastised by his lackeys if he did not leave the town at once. This, however, is one of those cases in which one story is only good until another is told. The Ambassador's account of the quarrel in letters to Abbé Alary at Paris exhibits Jean-Jacques in a much less dignified posture.

If the secretary's wages were not paid at the instant of his dismissal, there were, at any rate, reasons for withholding them. One reason was that M. de Montaigu had not received his own salary from Paris, and was short of money; the other, that Jean-Jacques' accounts needed to be looked into very carefully. He had presented hotel bills which he had not incurred, and charged for journeys which he had not made.

There is indeed one petty fraud of the kind of which he can be convicted out of his own *Confessions*.

"From Lyons," he writes, "I should have liked to take the Mont Cenis road in order to pay a passing visit to my poor mamma." Then he did not go to Chambéry. But he said that he had been there, and asked for, and was allowed, his expenses. The memorandum in which the item figures is in the Montaigu archives. In addition to this he had contracted debts at Venice for which he was being dunned at the Embassy, and had requested Madame de Montaigu, the Ambassador's sister in-law, to pay the bill for certain goods ordered "for self and friends" at one of the Paris shops; so that there were counter claims as well as claims, and these had to be balanced against each other before a settlement could be effected.

Nor can it be said that the secretary had, in other respects, given satisfaction. In one of the letters the Ambassador says that he dismissed him for smuggling. As he says in another letter that he dismissed him for other reasons, we need not lay too much stress upon that; but there is no doubt whatever that he smuggled, for the proof is in the archives of Venice. What he did was to forge a certificate setting forth that certain bales of goods were intended for the Embassy and therefore privileged to pass unopened through the Customs House. Such certificates were made out in duplicate; one copy accompanying the goods, while the other was kept at the Custom House for reference. Jean-Jacques erased the word *duplicata*, and used the duplicate for his own benefit as a fresh certificate. The duplicate thus treated, together with the police report attesting the fraud, is still to be seen at

Venice; and the discovery of the trick may well have been a cause of strained relations between the Ambassador and his secretary.

The final quarrel, however, was due, according to M. de Montaigu, not to the secretary's misdeeds, but to his "insolence." He had been told to prepare a certain memorial to the Venetian Senate. Instead of doing the work himself, he turned it over to a junior secretary; asked for explanations, he was impudent. Then the Ambassador sent him back to write out the memorial in his own hand, and, when he had received it, told him that he had no further occasion for his services and that he might present his account. The account, as has already been explained, was open to criticism. M. de Montaigu criticised it; Jean-Jacques protested; and the Ambassador, as he admits, lost his temper. This is his version of the story, which it is interesting to compare with Jean-Jacques' version, quoted in a preceding paragraph :—

"At this I got excited, and told him that there had been times when such an impertinent rascal as he showed himself would have had to leave my study by way of the window—that he had all the bad qualities of a bad lackey, and that I should examine his account for his travelling expenses upon that assumption. He then became so insolent . . . that I told him that, if he did not drop that tone and make up his mind to leave Venice, I should let him see how far my authority extended. I reminded him too that he was indebted to a tradesman of the town, who had only supplied him on my guarantee, and that I should deduct the amount of this debt from

the sum which I owed him. He answered th
would be quite capable of paying his debts w
gave him what he claimed was due to him.
him to leave the house at once, because I di
wish to proceed personally to certain extreme co
adding that I would send him his account, as I
it out, in the course of the afternoon, together
the tradesman in question, whom I wished to re
an immediate cash settlement, as I knew
Rousseau was a rascal with debts all over the to

The scene passed without witnesses; and
quite possible that the Ambassador did not, any
than his secretary, confine himself to an imp
statement of the facts, but all the coll
evidence that we have is in his favour.
know that Jean Jacques, when he clamoured
his return to Paris, obtained no redress, and wa
that he had no grievance, and we know that
Montaigu did ultimately settle the amended ac
We also know that the account required amend
and that the man who presented it had abu
confidential position. The author of the *Confes*
in short, has once more been convicted of tw
the truth to his own glorification. Of the
and official aspects of his sojourn in Venice t
all that there is to be said.

Nor is there a great deal that it is profitab
say about his private life during the same p
We find him still in occasional correspondence
Madame de Warens, and we still find nothing i
letters to indicate that he had ever been more t
than the protégé whom she had helped on his

through the world. He sends "a thousand messages of friendship" to his supplanter Wintzinried, referring to him as "Taleralatarela"—a tribute apparently to his boisterous bonhomie. He requests that his own letters shall be addressed to "M. Rousseau, Secretary of the French Embassy at Venice"—a proof that it was not only when he came to write his autobiography that he invested his office with greater dignity than appertained to it. For the rest, his narrative is mainly the story of his adventures among the Venetian courtesans, whom he visited because he had been assured that "there were no others of equal merit in the world."

The adventures themselves present no remarkable feature and led to no consequences which a biographer need note. Jean-Jacques was no more the first than he was the last man of genius to knock at the door of the house of Rahab. It would not have been worth while to track him there if he had made any mystery of his movements, and decency requires that a veil should be drawn over many of the details given. The pleasantries which he exchanged with Rahab, however appropriate to the occasion, are quite unfit to repeat. The one thing worthy of note is that he sentimentalised over her:—

"I said to myself, 'This creature of which I dispose is the masterpiece of nature and love. Her mind and her body alike are perfect. She is as good and generous as she is amiable and beautiful. The great ones and the Princes of the earth should be her slaves; sceptres should be laid at her feet. And yet

behold her—a miserable street walker, the servant of the public! A mere captain in the merchant service may possess her if he likes. She throws herself at my head, though she knows nothing of me—though my merits, if she were aware of them, would count as nothing in her eyes.'"

Et cetera. One quotes the passage for literary and not for biographical reasons. It is not, though it reads as if it might have been, the prelude of a romance. When Jean Jacques sentimentalises, he always has his eye on the general rather than the particular. La Padoana did not understand, and he did not try to explain. She thought him a fool, and he let her think so. It might have been difficult to argue the point with her when she advised him to "leave the ladies alone and study mathematics instead." It was much simpler to accept the snub and go away to sentimentalise in secret. He did so, and La Padoana passed out of his life on the same afternoon on which she had entered it. But the sentimentalising none the less strikes a new note in literature—a note which has since echoed loudly down the corridors of time in the pages of writers of the Romantic Movement.

In its psychological origin, the sentimental exaltation of the harlot is probably a young man's gratitude for favours received. It flatters his vanity to exaggerate the significance of those favours. The only way to exaggerate their significance is to respect, and even to idealise, the woman who bestows them—to represent her, if she be a harlot, as the victim of her misfortunes—to discover that she who is indulgent

more beautiful soul than the other women who severe. It is not exactly a chain of reasoning, t is a process through which the senses deceive ntellect until experience brings enlightenment. t all events it often is so in the case of men are at once sensual and sentimental.

There had, of course, been sentimentalists of this before Jean-Jacques sentimentalists even who mentalised on paper in this particular way. Prévost had written *Manon Lescaut*. Jean-ues had read the book, and may be presumed ave felt its influence. But the influence which nderwent was as nothing compared with the nce which he was to exercise. He was greater his predecessor, and therefore we may justly t him rather than his predecessor as the real nator of the Romantic worship of Cotytto and s in a Christian atmosphere with Christian l.

M. Jules Lemaître,[1] tracing the history of the in French literature, quotes Alfred de Musset's —

> "Jacque était immobile et regardait Marie . . .
> Il se sentait frémir d'un frisson inconnu.
> N'était-ce pas sa sœur, cette prostituée?"

He might equally well have quoted Victor Hugo's *sultez jamais la femme qui tombe*, and many ages from *Les Misérables*. He might equally have quoted from *La dame aux camélias* or *The Unclassed*, or from the works of many r writers to whose tone in these matters the

[1] *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. Par Jules Lemaître.

cynical laughter of Maupassant in *La maison T*
is the counterblast.

So that Jean Jacques' stay at Venice (thou
only lasted a year and not eighteen months,
says) does seem to mark a stage in his sentim
and so indirectly in his literary development.
ideas which were to mark his position a
forerunner of the Romantic School were
ning, if his retrospect be right, to germ
Only they were very far from blossoming, a
was hardly yet aware of them. His sentimen
was so far from expressing itself in conduct t
this stage he and his friend Carrio actually h
a little girl of eleven years old from her moth
tending her to be their joint mistress. "My
was moved to compassion at the sight of the
he writes; but compassion did not hinder him
carrying the transaction through. He tells u
he was kind to the girl, and respected her
years, waiting patiently for her maturity; but st

It all came to nothing, however, owing to
Jacques' dismissal from the Embassy. His in
tion and his grievances gave him other thin
think about. He was returning to Paris to p
and clamour, and the little child, his chattel, wa
gotten. We will hope that Carrio was good to

CHAPTER XIV

Jean-Jacques thrown over by Mesdames de Beuzenval and de Broglie—Becomes secretary to Madame Dupin and M. de Francueil—In society but not of it—Makes the acquaintance of Thérèse le Vasseur—Thérèse becomes his mistress—The secret of her attraction for him.

When Jean-Jacques returned to Paris in 1744, he was thirty-two and a failure. He had not yet found himself. If he had looked for himself, he had looked in the wrong direction.

He was not even yet, it must be repeated, a philosopher or anything remotely like a philosopher. He was merely a young man who expected to arrive—somewhere, he did not know exactly where—by hanging on to the coat tails and the petticoats—especially the petticoats—of the great. That was the way of the age. A few men of letters, like Montesquieu, were born to dignity. The others could only attain to it, if at all, by the path of impudence—by soliciting favours and intriguing for the perpetration of jobs. There was no open road to public favour; the patron held the gate.

His conduct at Venice had embroiled Jean-Jacques with one group of patrons. For Madame de Beuzenval and Madame de Broglie he was a protégé to be thrown over because he had failed to justify himself. They felt that they had found him

out—that he was an ill-conditioned boor who was not worth while to help. He wrote M. de Benzenval a letter on the subject in which can discern the bitterness of his humiliation and first signs of that white heat of passionate against social inequalities which was in later to blaze up and spread over France like a p fire; "So I was wrong, madame. I thought just, whereas you are only noble. I should remembered that. I should have perceived t was unbecoming in me, a foreigner and a pleb etc.—a foreshadowing at last of the revoluti Jean-Jacques that was to be.

The indignation, however, was not yet gener. Not the social system but only individual me of society were attacked. Repudiated by so his patrons as an ungrateful servitor, Jean J. clung as closely as ever to the patrons who con to be kind—notably to Madame Dupin and Francueil.[1]

The relation in which he stood to the nowhere exactly defined. Presumably it indefinite and variable, and Jean Jacques was tutor, now secretary, now factotum and g handy-man. He certainly helped in the edu of Madame Dupin's son, M. de Chenonceaux. of her fragmentary literary compositions, pub in *Le portefeuille de Madame Dupin*, are handwriting. In the Memoirs of Madame de C

[1] The grandfather of George Sand.

[2] Madame de Créquy's Memoirs are of doubtful auth but the few statements here taken from them can be c from other sources.

we read that he was sometimes sent on errands to inquire about the "characters" of servants. He tells us himself that he drew a salary of 900 livres a year from M. de Francueil, though for what precise services one does not very clearly understand. We know, however, that he attended chemistry lectures with his employer, and accompanied him to his country house in Touraine, where he helped to organise musical entertainments. He wrote comedies; he composed operettas; he took part in amateur theatrical performances; he made new friends — among others Madame d'Épinay and Madame d'Houdetot, then Mademoiselle de Bellegarde, who were both presently to play parts in the developing drama of his life. His friends helped him to procure the production of some of his musical pieces, though no special success attended them. What is more significant to the biographer is that Jean-Jacques at this stage was living a double life.

He was in society, as we have noted, but not of it. Perhaps, indeed, he was hardly so much in it as hanging on to the skirts of it, occupying, in virtue of his talents, a position which he had some difficulty in holding because of his ignorance of the usages of the world. The leaders of society liked him, but did not regard him as an equal; he had not Voltaire's easy way of comporting himself as their equal and compelling them to accept him as such. A child of Geneva, he had not the Parisian's assurance and supple adaptability. His letters, which have been quoted, to Madame Dupin and Madame de Beuzenval show him alternately overdoing his humility and his self-assertiveness. He bowed too low but with too

stiff a backbone. "He pays compliments, and yet he is not polite," was a contemporary verdict on him. "An air of sullenness" was also remarked. The picture is of a man who has failed, and knows that he has failed, to find his real life in the company in which he lives—who cannot get in touch with the world in which he moves as the only means of furthering his ambition. To complete the picture we have to introduce Thérèse Le Vasseur.

She was the needlewoman at the hotel, or boarding-house, in which Jean-Jacques lodged and took his meals when none of his patrons invited him to dinner: a daughter of the people, twenty-two years of age, relatively virtuous in spite of a single lapse, amiable and naive but quite uneducated, barely able to read and write, not in the least anxious to be taught to do so, incapable even, as it proved, of learning to tell the time from the dial of a clock. Sitting at table with the boarders, she was the butt of the company, mostly consisting of "Irish and Gascon priests and people of that sort." Jean Jacques first took her part against her persecutors, and then proposed that she should live under his protection:—

"She looked upon me as an honest man, and she was right. I regarded her as a sympathetic young woman, simple in her habits, devoid of coquetry, and I too was not mistaken. I told her beforehand, that though I would never desert her, still I should never marry her. Love, esteem, and simple-minded sincerity were the ministers of my triumph. It was because her heart was tender and honest that I

achieved my good fortune without needing to be bold and dashing."

That is the story of the commencement of partnership—the word "liaison" seems out of place which was to continue until Jean-Jacques' death. Many biographers have thrown up their hands in respectful amazement at the proceeding; but though one assuredly would not generalise about it and say that this is how a wise man would live most wisely, it is hardly, in view of the circumstances, astonishing.

Cynical observers of life have often remarked that when a man of over thirty remains unmarried, there is a strong presumption either that he is physically unfit for marriage, or else that he has some secret entanglement. Jean-Jacques was only conforming to the natural law on which that assumption is based. He was a disappointed man, an unconsidered satellite in the social system in which, with sustained and conscious effort, he revolved; he missed, and wanted, a fixed, permanent, and personal interest in life. It is a common desire, and marriage is the means by which it is commonly satisfied; eminent elderly barristers have been known to marry their housekeepers in such cases. But for Jean-Jacques marriage was difficult. In Madame Dupin's circle he was—he must have been—regarded as hopelessly ineligible; nor would it have been permissible for him in that circle to introduce a daughter of the people as his wife. Depending upon his connection with that circle for his livelihood, yet feeling the need of what Gibbon calls "a domestic

female companion," he really had little choice but to enter upon the double life which he describes.

He tells us that he was not in love with Thérèse that he "never felt the faintest spark of love" for her; and a psychological problem has been scented in that confession too. One can best solve the puzzle by assuming that the statement is not quite literally true. Jean Jacques had had plenty of time to tire of Thérèse, when he made it; she on her part had had plenty of time to lose her charms; a different and more violent passion, of which we shall have to speak, had intervened. A man does not readily admit to himself that he once passionately loved a cantankerous old woman whose fidelity is not above suspicion and whose relatives have descended upon him like harpies and sucked his blood like vampires. Yet he may have done so—at least after a fashion. The daughters of the people are sometimes charming when they are young, and have a way of appearing more charming than they actually are. Use is needed to bring home to their lovers the full horror of their vulgarity. It does not seem to matter, at first, that they are as brainless as birds; it is not discovered until later that they can be as vituperative as fish fags.

Reading between the lines of the *Confessions*, one may suspect, if one cannot actually trace, a development of sentiment on the lines which these reflections indicate. The day was to come when Jean Jacques was to "make a dictionary" of his mistress's ungrammatical and vulgar modes of speech "for the amusement of Madame de Luxembourg", but that was long afterwards, in the days when he was a great moral teacher. When he met

Thérèse, he was still young, and glad, apparently, to escape with her from the artificialities of fashionable drawing-rooms to simpler pleasures:

"If I could describe our pleasures, you would laugh at their simplicity: our *tête à tête* walks into the country, where, in splendid style, I spent fourpence or fivepence in some little country inn; our suppers at the open window, where we sat on two low chairs placed on the top of a travelling trunk which filled all the space available there. The window-sill served us for a table; we breathed the fresh air; we looked out upon the streets and the passers-by, and though we were on the fourth floor, could see what was going on below while we ate. Who can describe—and who can realise—the delight of these repasts, consisting only of a slice of bread, a few cherries, a small piece of cheese, and a half-bottle of wine which we divided between us? Friendship, confidence, intimacy, sympathy of soul—what a relish do such things give! Sometimes we sat there till midnight, without thinking what we were doing, without suspecting how late it was."

It is an idyllic picture; and there is not, as in the case of the idyll of Les Charmettes, any reason to doubt its accuracy. Memories of such idylls, with a daughter of the people for partner, undoubtedly linger in the minds of many men who do not speak of them; and it is absurd to say that there has been "no spark of love" when such things have happened. There has been love, though it has not lasted—though the summer has failed to

fulfil the promise of the spring. Why need we that it was with Jean-Jacques as with other the same case?

The difference between his case and the that he did not take flight at the instant of disi Had he done so, the idyll of which he give glimpse as it were by inadvertence would remained an idyll in his recollection. He would have travelled back to it as to the mem the vanished glory of his lost youth; it would been the starting-point of the vision of the thin might have been. We know him well enough sure of that. He had just that sort of sentimen just that sort of imagination. Only, as it hap he and Thérèse had remained together long a poetry had vanished from their relations. He the worst as well as the best about her, and th of fancy was impeded by the palpable evide sober fact. The Thérèse who sat opposite on his hearth when he wrote his *Confessions* ugly old woman—a shrew with insatiable p desires, who reproached him for his physical limi and preferred the embraces of a groom. No could he have no illusions about such a "de female companion", he had even forgotten a the truth about her. That was how he came t that there had never been, on his side, "the spark of love."

It is usual to hear him praised because, not the faintest spark of love for Thérèse, he never lived with her for five-and-thirty years. pictured, by the enthusiasts, as bearing his from a sense of duty, virtuously enduring t

expected weight of his responsibilities with the resignation of a Christian and a philosopher. The facts, however, hardly justify that view, and the enthusiasm which inspires it needs to be moderated. Jean-Jacques' fidelity to Thérèse was of a very limited character. It did not prevent him from entertaining a desperate passion for Madame d'Houdetot, or from ridiculing her ignorance, "for the amusement of Madame de Luxembourg," or from consigning her children to the Foundling Hospital. One cannot admit any exalted motive for a fidelity compatible with such lapses; and motives that are not exalted can easily be found.

He was poor, and Thérèse was necessary to him: one need not look for any more subtle explanation of his fidelity than that. He needed her not only as a mistress but also as a housekeeper and a nurse. It was as a nurse, indeed, that he needed her most of all. He suffered from a malady[1] of which he was always ashamed—a malady which made connubial intimacy embarrassing and called for incessant and intimate attention. Failing a devoted wife with a genius for self-sacrifice, he was best off—and knew that he was best off—in the hands of a daughter of the people, of no too delicate sensibility, his social inferior,

[1] A disorder of the bladder. Jean-Jacques attributes it to a congenital malformation, but there is some reason to suspect that it was only functional—the result, in large measure, of a gouty diathesis. There is a mass of medical literature on the subject, but a review of it would be out of place in a work intended for general reading. The existence of the malady, however, is a fact which no critic of Jean-Jacques' life can afford to forget. His hypochondria is largely attributable to it.

bound to him by ties alike of interest and gratitude. Thérèse supplied this want.

No doubt there were times when she was trying. She could be no intellectual companion to Jean-Jacques; and she had a horde of hungry relatives who exploited and robbed him. Her tongue was an unruly member, and often made mischief when it wagged; she brought railing accusations with the vehement loquacity of her class. She did not improve in temper as she grew older and had to accompany a protector who was driven from pillar to post for reasons beyond her comprehension. She also made him ridiculous by extracting gifts from his friends behind his back. But she had her good qualities too—at least to begin with, though time in the end wore them out. Her vivacity was a check upon Jean-Jacques' disposition to melancholia; she was not without practical common sense; she was not ungrateful, and she did her duty as a nurse. So she came to be necessary, and a habit was established.

The first habit established, however, was that of sending the children born of the alliance to the Foundling Hospital. Or so Jean-Jacques says, though some of his admirers have taken the liberty of contradicting him. Our next task must be to tell that story and try to get at the rights of it.

CHAPTER XV

Jean Jacques and Therèse send their children to the Foundling Hospital. Explanations and excuses. Is the story true?—The doubts of Dr. Rousel. The theory of Mrs. Macdonald. Reasons for not accepting Mrs. Macdonald's theory.—Amorous adventure of Jean Jacques, Grimm, and Klupfell.

It was on his return from a visit to his fashionable friends at Chenonceaux that Jean-Jacques learnt that he was about to become a father—or, at all events, that Thérèse was about to become a mother. "In view of my situation," he says, "this would have been extremely embarrassing if the friends whom I used to meet at dinner had not shown me the only way out of the difficulty."

He and Thérèse, it must be observed, were not yet living together. Though she was under his protection, her home was still with her mother; and Jean-Jacques habitually took his meals in a kind of boarding-house near the Opera, kept by the wife of a tailor. The company, he explains, was at once disreputable and select. Admission to it could only be obtained through the introduction of a habitué, but the persons introduced were chiefly debauchees—the protectors of the ballet-girls and the casual lovers of the young women now known as "midinettes." Their talk at table was mainly of their gallant

adventures. After dinner they adjourned from the table to the shop to pursue their amours with the shop-girls; and "he who made the largest contributions to the population of the Foundling Hospital was sure of the loudest applause." Jean Jacques was impressed, and took counsel with himself. "It is the custom of the country," he reflected. "When one lives in a country there can be no harm in following its customs." And therefore:

"There was the expedient that I was looking for. I decided to adopt it in a spirit of robust gaiety, without the faintest scruple. The only scruple which I had to overcome was that of Thérèse, whom I had the greatest difficulty in the world in persuading to take the course to save her honour. Her mother, who thought another baby would be a nuisance, came to my help, and she allowed herself to be convinced. We chose a prudent and trustworthy midwife, named Mademoiselle Gouin . . . to take charge of our deposit; and when the time came Thérèse was taken by her mother to Gouin's house for her accouchement. I went to see her there several times, and brought her a cipher which I had made out in duplicate on two cards. One of the ciphers was placed in the child's clothes, and the child was handed in by the midwife in the ordinary way at the office of the Foundling Hospital. In the following year we had a repetition of the same trouble, and adopted the same expedient, except that we omitted the cipher. I did not reflect any more than on the first occasion, nor did the mother approve. She obeyed with lamentations."

d so forth. Three more children were similarly
ed of in subsequent years; and Jean Jacques'
ade for Thérèse's "honour" did not seem to him
y with it any obligation to keep her secret. Nor
er mother, if we may believe him, any more
l of her daughter's reputation. The secret
became *secret de Polichinelle*. Jean Jacques
rimm and Diderot at the time, and afterwards
Madame d'Epinay and Madame de Luxem-
Madame Le Vasseur told Madame Dupin,
old Madame de Francueil, who even wrote to
Jacques on the subject. His reply is printed in
orrespondence. The only development to be
is that Jean Jacques continued as a philosopher
olicy which he had commenced as a debauchee.
eriod in which he was disposing of his offspring in
irit in which Punch throws the baby out of the
w was also the period in which he was establish-
s fame as an original thinker with plans for the
oration of the world. At the end of the period,
ore, he felt the need of a philosophical justifica-
or his conduct; and in the letter to Madame de
ueil he justifies himself:—

You know what my position is. I have difficulty
gh in earning my daily bread; I live from hand
outh. How could I support a family? If I were
ed to have recourse to the calling of an author,
would domestic anxieties and the squalling of
s leave me, in my garret, the peace of mind
site for profitable work? There is but little
y in the writings which hunger dictates, and one
comes to an end of this resource. I should have

been obliged, therefore, to seek the protection of patrons, to intrigue . . . to stoop, in short, to all the infamies for which I feel so just a horror. . . . No, madame, better that my children should be orphans than that their father should be a rascal."

Their mother, he adds, "with her own shame to consider and her own necessities to look after," was as much the victim of circumstances as himself. It would have been different if the children had been born in wedlock. A career might then have been found for them. But they were illegitimate, and therefore could only have been brought up to be "boot-blacks or bandits." He proceeds:—

"Then why, you will ask, did I not marry? Address that question, madame, to your own unjust laws. It did not suit me to contract a permanent engagement, and you cannot prove to me that I am under any obligation to do so. What is certain is that I have not done, and do not intend to do, anything of the kind. Then, you will say, one ought not to beget children if one cannot support them. Excuse me, madame, it is the will of Nature that one should beget children, seeing that the fruits of the earth are produced in sufficient abundance for the support of all. It is the rich—those of the class to which you belong—who rob the poor—those of my class—of their children's bread."

So the parents really had no choice in the matter, and, after all, what had been done was for the best. The Foundling Hospital, in truth, was a much-maligned institution. There was no barbarity in its

regulations. The foundlings were treated well, reared healthily, and educated sensibly :—

"I know that my children are not being brought up with delicate refinement; so much the better for them they will be the more robust in consequence. They get no superfluities, but they do get necessaries. They are taught, not to be gentlemen but to be peasants or workmen. I see nothing in this method of training which I should disapprove of for children of my own. If I were the master of their destiny, I should not have them brought up to be effeminate and liable to fall ill whenever they got tired or whenever the weather was inclement. . . . I would not have them taught to be authors or barristers. I would have them taught to handle not the pen but the plough or the tools of the carpenter—instruments in the use of which they would live a healthy, industrious, and innocent life, never making enemies by doing their work well. That is the lot to which they are destined. The rustic education which they are receiving will make them happier than their father."

And so forth, with a final reference to the philosophic Republic of Plato.

It is superfluous to grapple seriously with the arguments. Such of them as do not cancel each other could easily be destroyed by a *reductio ad absurdum*. Indeed, one hardly ventures to decide whether it is more ridiculous to reason that Nature must have intended A. to procreate children because B. is in a position to support them, or to cite the squalling of an infant as a reason for having it brought up at the cost

of the community at large. The apology, however, has its interest as Jean-Jacques' attempt to bring theory into line with practice, and as a proof that he was beginning to be sensible of the proud man's contumely and to think those revolutionary thoughts which were presently to set the heather ablaze.

He was already, in fact, beginning to discuss "inequality" in writings intended for publication as well as in his private correspondence. It will be necessary to say something about the doctrines propounded in those writings presently; but the relation of the Foundling Hospital story to them is only accidental, and there is a little more to be said about that story before it can properly be left.

Is it a true story?

It is, at any rate, Jean-Jacques' own story, told in Jean-Jacques' own words; and it is a confession of shame and no vainglorious boast. Still it has been criticised. There are critics who only believe a part of it, and critics who do not believe a word of it. At least three theories have been propounded. We have to examine not only the hypothesis that Jean-Jacques has told the truth, but also:—

1. *The theory that Jean-Jacques, being incapable of paternity, and knowing it, and surmising that his friends suspected it, invented the whole story in order to dissipate the doubts that had been thrown on his virility.*

2. *The theory that children were indeed born to Thérèse and sent to the Foundling Hospital by Jean-Jacques, but that Jean-Jacques was not, and had some reason to presume that he was not, their father.*

3. *The theory that Thérèse had no children, whether*

by Jean-Jacques or by any other man, but deceived Jean-Jacques and pretended to become a mother, at her own mother's wily instigation, in the hope of retaining and increasing the affection of her protector.

Between the first and the second theory it would, in any case, be difficult to decide. It does not follow that any given man actually was the father of any given child simply because he might have been. The two pleas, therefore, are legitimately alternative, and are so regarded by Dr. J. Roussel, the principal medical authority for the view that paternity was impossible to Jean-Jacques by reason of his constitutional infirmities.

Readers who are curious about the clinical details must be referred to Dr. Roussel's essay;[1] they are a little too clinical for introduction here. But the case is not one of those in which a layman must necessarily be silent in the presence of an expert witness. He may take his medical science from the expert and yet have his own opinion as to the strength of the evidence which brings the particular case within the group of cases concerning which the expert generalises. Let us put the argument as a syllogism and see what it amounts to. Thus:—

Major Premiss.—*All men who have suffered from certain specific disorders are incapable of paternity.*

Minor Premiss.—*Jean-Jacques had suffered from those specific disorders.*

Conclusion.—*Jean-Jacques was incapable of paternity.*

[1] In *J.-J. Rousseau jugé par les Français d'aujourdhui* (Perrin).

Precisely. The conclusion quite obviously follows from the premisses, and for the major premiss the lay critic may be contented to take the doctor's word. But the minor premiss needs rigid proof; and this is not forthcoming. We have nowhere any statement that Jean-Jacques was, at a definite date, suffering from a definite disorder—no such statement as we might have, for instance, in the case of a broken leg, or a cataract, or an attack of smallpox. What we have to go upon is merely a recollection of symptoms derived from the patient himself, couched in unscientific language, not precisely dated but written out for the most part at a time long posterior to the alleged births of the five children. Evidence of that sort scarcely warrants positive allegation.

Nor, be it added, is all the expert evidence on one side. The question was considered by the great Genevan physician Tronchin, and he took the view that Jean-Jacques "was not incapable of begetting children, but might perfectly well do so, granted certain conditions which he found in the case of Thérèse"; and though Tronchin knew far less of the subject in its general aspects than Dr. Roussel, he had one great advantage over him: he had seen the patient, and knew the history of the case. That, in the case of an ailment of a progressive character, is an important consideration; and it is impossible to exclude the hypothesis that the symptoms on which Dr. Roussel principally bases his conclusion may belong to a later date than that to which he attributes them. He has, indeed, most ingeniously established a very strong presumption—

yet hardly strong enough to override Jean-Jacques' circumstantial avowals.

At all events, it cannot override them to the extent of persuading us that Jean-Jacques invented the story as an answer to the sneers of persons who disputed his virility. There is little, if any, evidence that there were any such sneers to be answered. Unfruitful illegitimate relations were not so uncommon in the eighteenth century as to be likely to form the subject of gibes; and supposing that Thérèse did bear children, Jean-Jacques, not possessing Dr. Roussel's medical knowledge, would have had no reason, unless information of her infidelity had come to his ears, to doubt that they were his. It is credible enough, of course, that Thérèse had an *amant de cœur* of her own rank in life, and not incredible, though improbable, that she engaged in promiscuous amours. The little that is known to her discredit is quite sufficient to warrant us in suspecting more. But Jean-Jacques himself seems to have suspected nothing; and it is hard to doubt that he did send children to the Foundling Hospital in good faith, as it were, and in the conscientious belief that he was indeed an unnatural father.

For the third theory—Mrs. Frederika Macdonald's[1] theory that Thérèse pretended to have children "in order to compel Rousseau to recognise the tie between them as a binding one"—is the least acceptable of all. One is bound to reject it for lack of evidence, for lack of motive, and also because there was no antecedent probability that it would attain its end.

The hypothesis is based, apparently, upon Jean-

[1] In *J.-J. Rousseau: a Criticism* (Chapman & Hall).

Jacques' statement that he never saw any of his children; but that by itself proves very little. Thérèse can hardly have anticipated that he would express no wish to see a child that she told him was his; and, if she had expected such indifference, she would have had no reason to suppose that the birth of the child would be regarded by him as an additional bond of union. Her expectation would rather have been that he would display curiosity and make inquiries, and that the fraud would thus be exposed. Moreover, even if we grant that the fraud might have been conceived and perpetrated once, we are still left at a loss to understand why it should have been repeated on four subsequent occasions. The first experiment must have demonstrated its futility. It was obviously useless to form a habit of pretending to bear children to a man whose conduct showed so clearly that he regarded children not as pledges of love but as rubbish to be disposed of in the place which the State appointed for the purpose.

Nor can one allow much weight to Mrs. Macdonald's further point that Grimm and Diderot, when they quarrelled with Jean-Jacques and held him up to scorn, never charged him with this particular offence against humanity. They did not accuse him of it, according to Mrs. Macdonald, because, though he had told them the story, they knew that it was untrue. Yet Mrs. Macdonald avers that they brought against him many other charges which they knew to be untrue, so that that consideration alone would hardly have sufficed to silence them. It seems more reasonable to suppose that they held their tongues partly because, though they had

heard the story, they were not in a position to demonstrate its truth if it should be contradicted, partly because the charges might have provoked recriminations which they were not in a position to rebut, partly because their view of the functions of Foundling Hospitals did not materially differ from those of Jean-Jacques' other boon companions.

Grimm, at any rate, appears to have been jointly concerned with Jean Jacques in gallant adventures which reflected no credit upon either of them. They had a common friend in Klupfell, chaplain of the Prince of Saxe-Gotha. Klupfell had a mistress of tender years who lived with him but supplemented her allowance by extending her favours to other men. One of the most odious pages in the *Confessions* relates how he and Grimm and Jean-Jacques supped together. "The worthy Klupfell," runs the narrative, "was not the man to do the honours of hospitality by halves, and we all three took it in turns to visit the adjoining apartment with the little girl, who did not know whether to laugh or cry." Grimm, it is added, told the story, on the following day, to Thérèse as a good joke; and Thérèse was more shocked at Grimm's breach of faith than at Jean-Jacques' lapse from virtue. It is not a pretty story, but it illustrates the moral tone of the times, and indicates the restrictions which Grimm's recollections of his own levity might have imposed upon his moral indignation. Stories of Foundling Hospitals would hardly have shocked him. He would have remembered —what everybody knew — that his own friend d'Alembert was a foundling, abandoned by the fashionable Madame Tencin; and, as he was a tuft-

hunter, that example would have seemed to him to sanction the proceeding. What else, he would have asked himself, was a man in Jean-Jacques' position to do with his children? What else were the Foundling Hospitals for?

Moreover, it is not quite certain that Grimm did maintain the silence which Mrs. Macdonald attributes to him. Jean-Jacques expressly says that he did not, meaning presumably that, though he formulated no written indictment, he betrayed his friend's secret in private conversations; and he regarded this act of treachery as a crime far darker than his own misdeeds. This is the remarkable passage in which he says so:—

"This single fact condemns them. Without wishing to clear myself of the blame which I deserve, I would rather bear it than endure the reproaches which their malignity merits. My fault was great, but it was only an error of judgment. I neglected my duties, but no wish to inflict pain was present to my mind; for the heart of a father cannot feel very warmly towards children whom he has never seen. But to betray the confidence of a friend, to violate the holiest of all compacts, to publish abroad the secrets imparted under the seal of intimacy, to dishonour for one's pleasure the friend whom one has deceived and whose regard has survived the separation—this is more than a fault. It bespeaks baseness and blackness of soul."

CHAPTER XVI

Jean-Jacques sets up housekeeping with Thérèse and her mother —His new friends, "the philosophers": Diderot, Grimm, and d'Holbach—Marmontel's view of Jean-Jacques—Jean-Jacques visits Diderot in prison—The prize offered by the Dijon Academy for a discourse on the arts and sciences—Jean-Jacques decides to compete and to take the paradoxical view that the arts and sciences have done more harm than good.

The Foundling Hospital story, since there were five foundlings, extends over several years. We must turn back and traverse the same period a second time in order to pick up the threads.

To Jean-Jacques, it is clear, the story was no more than an episode—or rather a sequence of five episodes—unpleasant only until habit became second nature. The babies were a nuisance; but the nuisance could be minimised by the means which the State provided. He availed himself of those means, he says, *gaillardement*—in the spirit, that is to say, of Punch pitching his family out of the window. Once out of sight, they were out of mind—for the time being, at all events, and meanwhile Jean-Jacques was pushing his way and enlarging the circle of his friends.

Of his women friends something has already been said. He was indebted for material help to more than one of them. Madame Dupin, by raising

his salary, enabled him to set up housekeeping with Thérèse and her mother. Madame de Créquy, if her Memoirs may be trusted, made him a weekly present of a fat capon which Thérèse used to be sent to her house to fetch. His resources were further augmented by a small inheritance which came to him on his father's death in 1747; and he was able to sit in the cafés, and move, and make friends, among the party of the philosophers. His principal friends were Grimm and Diderot, already mentioned. With them he was intimate. He knew well, though less intimately, Abbé Raynal, Abbé de Condillac, Helvétius, Marmontel, and Baron d'Holbach.

Diderot, of course, needs no introduction; his impetuous figure is familiar to every student of the period. His energy was volcanic and his cleverness was diabolical. Moreover, both cleverness and energy were directed to a definite end. He knew what he wanted and was willing to work night and day in order to get it. At the time when he comes into this story he had just conceived the idea of an Encyclopædia which should be not merely a guide to knowledge but also an insidious weapon of war against traditional authority alike in Church and State. He had enrolled d'Alembert to help him with the science, and he enlisted Jean-Jacques to undertake the musical articles. "He had a Nannette," Jean-Jacques writes, "just as I had a Thérèse. That was a further link between us"; and we have no means of knowing whether the fact that Nannette was a married woman, whereas Thérèse was a kept mistress, made any difference to their relations.

Grimm, though intimate with both of them, re-

bled neither. Like Jean-Jacques, though unlike erot, he was an egoist—but an egoist of a simpler more common sort, less anxious to be remarked pointed at, more supple and adaptable, careful to no one the wrong way, a courtier by nature, using talents, without any philosophic *arrière pensée*, ingly for his personal advancement, eager ve all things to make himself a position in ety and succeed on approved lines. *Se faire ir* might have been his motto, and it steered ultimately into the confidence of kings. The itious son of a pastor of Ratisbon, who had e to Paris as the secretary of the Comte de Frise, resently became the Paris Correspondent of foreign ntates, sending them all the latest gossip in rcular letter for which they paid him well. His helor dinners, given in his private apartment in house of the Comte de Frise, were pleasant ures of the lighter side of philosophic life at the e. He and Jean-Jacques were for a while very nate, with a special bond of union in their common e for music. They practised together in Grimm's ns; they went to the Opera together; they joined rously together in the war of pamphlets between partisans of the French and Italian schools of ic. They also dined together frequently, with r philosophers, at Palais Royal restaurants; Jean-Jacques, he tells us, introduced Grimm to house of Baron d'Holbach.

D'Holbach, as is well known, kept open house philosophers; that is his chief, if not his only, to fame. He figures in Memoirs and in histories terature as *le maître d'hôtel de la philosophie.*

Marmontel met Jean Jacques at his house "before," as he puts it, "he had become a savage." This is his reminiscence: —

"He had not then declared himself, as he has since done, nor did he announce any ambition to form a sect. Either his pride was unborn, or he concealed it under the show of a timid politeness, that was sometimes even obsequious, and even bordered on humility. But in this timid reserve distrust was evidently visible; his eyes observed everything with a suspicious attention. He was very rarely affable, and never open hearted. He was not the less amicably received; as we knew, he indulged a restless self-love; tetchy, easily hurt, he was humoured and treated with the same attention and delicacy that we should use towards a beautiful woman, very vain and very capricious, whose favours we wished to obtain. He was then composing the music for the *Devin du village*, and sung to us at the harpsichord the airs he had written. We were charmed with them; we were not less so with the firm, animated, and profound manner in which his first essay on eloquence was written. Nothing could be more sincere, I ought to say it, than our benevolence for his person nor than our esteem for his talents."

The portrait, of course, was not drawn by an impartial hand. Marmontel did not like Jean-Jacques, and thought his teachings mischievous. Yet the description rings true and is probably a faithful rendering of the impression which Jean-Jacques made upon his circle. It is the

picture of a man who was in the circle but not of it—a man with whom it was difficult to be intimate for reasons not easy to define—a man whose abilities were more admired than his character, and who had to be treated as a spoiled child in order to be kept in a good temper. Perhaps one may add that it is a picture of a man living on sufferance in a society that tried to make the best of him and cherished the hope that by patience it might induce him to comport himself like a reasonable human being.

One of the precepts of the philosophic company is said to have been that Jean-Jacques had better give up living with Thérèse. There are vague rumours of a "friendly conspiracy" to separate him from her. That is not the sort of conspiracy which the man for whose presumed benefit it is entered into usually regards as friendly; and one can easily suppose that the suspicion of the intrigue made Jean-Jacques less genial than he would otherwise have been.

He was not supported by the force of a grand passion. He knew—he must have known—that he was making himself ridiculous. He envied — he must have envied—the lusty Marmontel, to whom so many queens of the French stage freely offered the precious favours which noble playgoers were glad to buy at a prodigious price. He also envied—he also must have envied—men of the world like Grimm, on whom women of fashion bestowed love instead of condescending patronage. For he too, as we know, had aspired, but with the discouraging results that we have seen. "Il me faut des princesses," had

been his motto; but no princess had responded, "Il me faut Jean Jacques." He had failed in his courtship of Madame Dupin, and acknowledged that he was properly "an object of disgust" to her; he had also failed in his essays in "chambering and wantonness," and been counselled to "leave the ladies alone and study mathematics instead." The *faux ménage* with Thérèse and her importunate mother was the best substitute that he had been able to contrive for the romances of which he had dreamed. He was naturally sensitive about it when he compared it with other men's romances. He scented disdain in their manner, and was ill at ease in their company.

That, we may be pretty sure, is the inwardness of the embarrassed reserve which Marmontel remarked and of the deferential humility which was presently to disappear. What Jean-Jacques needed to strengthen his hands was some signal success in life. Given that, he would be able to assert himself with gruff pride and maintain that he was living as he chose to live and had chosen the better part. And he was already, though he did not know it, standing on the threshold of success. It happened in this way:—

In the summer of 1749, when Jean-Jacques was thirty-seven, Diderot's audacious writings got him into trouble. He had made some disrespectful references to Madame de Pompadour, and the authorities were glad of a pretext for a perquisition which would enable them to seize the materials which he had collected for his Encyclopædia. So he was arrested and sent to the prison of Vincennes.

He was not, however, cast into a dungeon and fed upon bread and water, but merely kept in comfortable confinement, in the style in which German officers are sometimes detained in fortresses, allowed to wander freely in the Park, to pursue his avocations, and to receive his friends. Jean-Jacques, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by Madame Diderot, spent nearly every afternoon with him. Unable to afford to drive to Vincennes, he walked, taking some book or paper with him to read when resting by the wayside. On one of his walks he happened to glance over the *Mercure de France*; and he read in it that the Academy of Dijon offered a prize for an essay on the question, "Has the progress of the arts and sciences contributed to the corruption or to the purification of manners?" On the spot, he says, he formed the resolution to compete.

But what view to take—the obvious or the paradoxical?

So far as the manner of a man's life may be said to commit him to anything, Jean-Jacques was committed to the obvious view. As a contributor to the Encyclopædia he was doing what he could to advance the cause of science; as a musical composer he was labouring in the field of art. He could hardly, without stultifying himself, argue that art and science were corrupting influences; yet he chose to do so. Why? Was it inspiration that determined him, or low cunning? Did he believe that the truth had been suddenly revealed to him, or did he merely surmise that to be paradoxical was his best chance of winning the prize?

Nobody knows; nobody will ever know. Very possibly his motives were so mixed that he could not himself have disentangled them. All that is quite certain is that, though he took the paradoxical view, he did not alter his mode of living so as to conform to it. He continued to compose music, and he proceeded to study botany. In later years he wrote on both these subjects. That is our best reason for supposing that there was less of the earnestness of the missionary than of the desire to shock and startle the world in this particular declaration of policy. It is also our best reason for inclining to accept the version of the story given by Marmontel. He had it from Diderot, and he related it to Voltaire:—

"I was" 'tis Diderot who speaks—"I was a prisoner at Vincennes; Rousseau came to see me there. He had made me his Aristarchus, as he has said himself. One day, as we were walking together, he told me that the Academy of Dijon had just proposed an interesting question, which he was desirous of treating. This question was: 'Has the progress of arts and sciences contributed to the improvement of morals?' 'Which side will you take?' asked I. 'The affirmative,' answered he. 'Tis the asses' bridge,' said I; 'all ordinary talents will take that road, and you will there find only commonplace ideas; whereas the contrary side presents a new, rich, and fertile field for philosophy and for eloquence.'

"'You are right,' returned he, after a moment's reflection; 'and I'll take your advice.' 'Thus, from

that moment,' added I, 'his part has been decided, and the mask worn.'"

"'You do not astonish me,' said Voltaire; 'that man is factitious from head to foot: he is so in his mind and soul. But it is in vain for him to play now the stoic and now the cynic; he will eternally belie himself, and his mask will stifle him.'"

Jean-Jacques, that is to say, according to Marmontel, took a line by accident, and so found the part in life which it best suited him to play. It might also be said, with almost equal plausibility, that by winning the prize, and so achieving his first real success in life, he found the opportunity of realising himself and throwing off the mask which he had previously worn. In any case, however, he did not adopt his new rôle or discard his old mask immediately. Following his fortunes for another year or two, we find him still going on pretty much as before —still depending upon Madame Dupin and M. de Francueil, still consorting with the philosophers and sitting at d'Holbach's table, still endeavouring to conquer fortune as a musical composer.

CHAPTER XVII

The discourse on the arts and sciences—The argument examined—An indictment of luxury—Jean Jacques "lionised"—He cultivates eccentricity and lives the simple life with ostentation—Hostility of the philosophers—Enthusiasm of society—Production of *Le devin du village* before the King at Fontainebleau—Jean Jacques in the author's box—Unshaven and dishevelled—"Caressed" by the aristocracy—Refuses to be presented to the King, and misses a pension in consequence—Decides to revisit Geneva.

We have a pleasant glimpse at Jean-Jacques' domestic interior in his statement that he lay in bed and dictated his paradoxes to the mother of Thérèse. He liked the old lady so little that one is glad to learn that he found a means of making her useful; and one wonders what she, on her part, made of the flowing phrases. Probably nothing; in which case her instinct, if not her judgment, was sound.

Modern readers, at any rate, need not allow their reverence for a great name to deceive them concerning the value of the discourse as a contribution to sociology. It has no such value. Where it is not merely crude, it is irrelevant to the question nominally at issue. There is no arguing with a man who declares that "geometry is the outcome of avarice," and that the sciences in general "owe their birth to idleness and encourage it"—especially when he goes on to praise Sir Isaac Newton and flatter the Acade-

micians of Dijon. He refutes himself by his inconsistencies. Contemporary critics contended that Jean-Jacques did not mean a word that he said: the difficulty of the modern critic is to discover that he ever said anything at all which he did not immediately afterwards contradict.

The argument, in so far as there is any, runs somewhat as follows: The arts and sciences minister to luxury; luxury is damnable; and therefore—— The conclusion is easy, and so is the rejoinder. Indeed, the ease with which the refutation can be effected is not only a reason for leaving it unattempted, but also a proof that Jean-Jacques was really concerned with something else than the formal demonstration of his thesis. His attack on the arts and sciences was only an excuse for declaiming against luxury; his real, underlying proposition was that Parisian society, in spite of its splendour, to which the sciences and the arts contributed,—in spite of its vainglorious pride in intellectual progress,—was, in truth, rotten to the core.

He did not, it is true, succeed in saying quite so much as that. It is doubtful even whether he quite understood that it was that he was trying to say. The art of writing, as he justly remarks, is not learnt in a day; nor is the art of preaching, of reasoning, or even of thinking. Never an exact thinker, Jean-Jacques was at this stage a singularly casual and haphazard thinker. But that, nevertheless, was the fundamental thought ensconced at the back of his brain. He put it seriously, though vaguely, and it contained the germ of the message which he was presently to deliver. It was true, too,—and people knew that it was true,—in a loose, general way, though

not in the particular shape in which he presented it. That, and not its merit as a piece of argumentation, is the reason why the essay made a stir.

It made a stir, in short, in somewhat the same way—though not quite in the same way—in which Father Vaughan's "smart set" sermons lately made a stir. It was piquant to the smart set of the eighteenth, as of the twentieth, century to see their vices lashed. It was more piquant still to see them lashed by a man who had moved in the set and might be supposed to know what he was talking about. It was most piquant of all to be attacked for the wrong reasons and to see the blame thrown on the wrong people—on the men, that is to say, who were really the salt of the society denounced. It was impossible for Society to be angry with such an assailant. The natural thing for Society to do was to make a pet of him, pretending that no harm was done and that only the windows of the philosophers were broken.

That was what happened; and if the excitement produced was more animated than in Father Vaughan's case, the circumstances of the time supply the explanation. Society in those days was smaller and more circumscribed than in ours. Fewer interests competed for its attention; there were fewer celebrities to be "lionised." Enthusiasms were consequently more vehement and more concentrated. Nowadays such a popular reformer of morals as Father Vaughan may have to divide his popularity with some other popular hero of quite different calibre, such as Dr. W. G. Grace, or Buffalo Bill, or Fred Archer, or Jaggers, or Jumbo; he may even have to divide it with some other reformer, as the Bishop of London divides his

popularity with the Rev. R. J. Campbell. Our enthusiasms, in short, are diminished by being dispersed. The eighteenth century was satisfied with one enthusiasm at a time, and Jean Jacques had the field to himself. He occupied it, and struck an attitude.

His own statement is that he seized the opportunity to reform his morals and his manners, to withdraw from society to solitude, and to live in strict accordance with the virtuous principles suggested to him by his own discourse; but the details with which the statement is embellished show that he did nothing of the kind. He continued to write on the sciences and to cultivate the arts; he also continued to forward children to the Foundling Hospital; and this is the period during which he was composing, and arranging for the production of *Le devin du village*. But he did to some extent alter, though he did not exactly mend, his ways. He cultivated a deliberate eccentricity; he made Society curious about him by his provocative defiance of its usages.

In the first place, he threw up a good appointment in the Ministry of Finance procured for him by M. de Francueil, and announced his intention of earning his living by copying music. In the second place, he ceased to dress like a gentleman. He wore no more gold lace and no more white stockings; he laid aside his sword, adopted a "round wig" of plain, undecorative character, and sold his watch, declaring that he had no longer any need to know the time of day. One of the brothers of Thérèse completed the simplification of his wardrobe by stealing his forty-two white shirts, and he did not replace them, but decided that the coarsest linen should suffice for him

in the future. Nor was that all. He finally, for reasons which he is candid enough to state, renounced the habit of politeness :—

"My silly and morose shyness, which I could never overcome, being really due to my fear that I was not observing the rules of good form, I gave myself courage by making up my mind to trample those rules underfoot. I adopted a caustic and cynical tone; I affected to despise the good manners which I was incapable of practising."

Not every one, of course, was favourably impressed by the new departure. The philosophers who met at d'Holbach's table were quite clever enough to see through it; and we may take it that their view is fairly adequately rendered by Marmontel's remarks :—

"Rousseau" (says Marmontel), "foreseeing that by colouring paradoxes with his style, and by animating them with his eloquence, it would be easy for him to obtain a crowd of enthusiasts, conceived the ambition of forming a sect; and instead of being a simple associate in the philosophic school, he wanted to be the chief and sole professor in a school of his own; but withdrawing from our society like Buffon, without dispute and without noise, he would not have completed his object. To attract the crowd, he had attempted to give himself the air of an old philosopher; he showed himself at the Opera, in the coffee-houses, in the walks, first in an old greatcoat, and then in the habit of an Armenian;[1] but neither

[1] This is inaccurate. The Armenian garb was not adopted until a later date.

his little dirty wig and the stick of Diogenes nor his fur cap arrested the passengers."

Perhaps not; though the inner meaning of the outburst evidently is, not that Jean-Jacques failed to attract attention, but that Marmontel, speaking on behalf of the philosophers generally, considered that such foolish proceedings did not deserve to attract it. But if philosophical society remained indifferent, the curiosity of fashionable society was piqued.

"The success of my writings" (says Jean-Jacques) "had made me the fashion. The style of life that I had adopted excited curiosity. People wanted to know this extraordinary man, who ran after no one and only desired to live freely and happily in his own manner. That sufficed to make it impossible for me to do so. My apartment was always full of people who called, on one pretext or another, to take up my time. The women employed any and every device in order to get me to dine with them. The ruder I was to people the more they insisted. It was impossible for me to decline all their invitations. Though my refusals made me numberless enemies, I was continually the victim of my good nature, and, whatever I did, I could never contrive to have an hour to myself."

Nor did the callers come empty-handed. They sought to conciliate the philosopher with gifts, aspiring, as he says, to the "glory" of overcoming his resistance, and taxing him with arrogance and ostentation if he declined their offerings.

His resistance was not at first, it would appear,

invincible. This was the period during which Thérèse called regularly at Madame de Créquy's house to fetch the fat capon which was that lady's weekly token of regard; and we hear of presents of cash as well as offerings in kind. "If I had gone on like that," Jean Jacques says, "it would presently have come to my exhibiting myself at so much a head." Thérèse and the Mother Le Vasseur would have been entirely pleased that he should do so. That, in their view, was what the sciences and the arts were for. The measure of the success of an artist or a man of science was, for them, the amount of money that he could extract from the pockets of wealthy admirers. They adhered to the theory long after Jean-Jacques had abandoned it. While he was giving out that presents were a nuisance and compromised his dignity, they continued to accept presents and even to hint that presents would be acceptable. "I should have needed," he says, "more firmness than I possessed to get myself out of the mess. I could scream at them, but I could not act. They let me talk, and continued to behave as before." And indeed he allowed himself to some extent to be infected by their precepts and example.

Meanwhile, however, living in the circumstances and striking the attitude described, Jean-Jacques, instead of flying from society to solitude, was attending to the production of an opera and a play. *Narcisse* was put on the stage at the Comédie-Française in 1752, and was a failure. *Le devin du village*, first played before Louis XV. at Fontainebleau in the same year, met with a happier fate. The King hummed some of the airs; the Court applauded; the

author was present at one of the performances, and had his opportunity of striking his new attitude in circumstances in which it could not fail to be remarked.

He was shabbily dressed. His chin was unshaven and his wig uncombed. Nevertheless, he was shown into one of the most conspicuous boxes in the theatre, immediately opposite to the box in which the King sat with Madame de Pompadour—placed there, of course, for no other reason than that the curious might stare at him. The light of innumerable candles blazed upon his face; and the well-dressed company gazed their fill, admiring his unkempt appearance. It was a proud but also a trying moment. He had to make a special philosophical effort to preserve composure:—

"At first" (he says) "I felt uncomfortable, and asked myself whether I was in my proper place, and whether I was suitably dressed; but, after several minutes of uneasiness, I answered 'Yes,' with an intrepidity which was due perhaps to the impossibility of withdrawing from my position rather than to the validity of my arguments. 'Yes,' I said to myself, 'I am in my proper place, because I am going to see my piece performed, because I have been invited, because I composed it with that end in view, and because no one has a better right than I have to enjoy the product of my labour and my talents. I am dressed in my ordinary style, neither better nor worse than usual. If I allow myself to be the slave of public opinion in one matter, I shall soon be its slave in all respects. In order to be truly myself, I must not blush, wherever I may be, because I am dressed as I choose to dress. My exterior is simple, but at least I am not dirty.'"

The arguments would not, perhaps, have consoled Jean-Jacques very much if ladies had actually sniggered behind their fans, or if Court officials had bidden him go home and shave. But nothing of the kind occurred. He was Society's new toy. Society had known him in the days when he dressed, and tried to behave, like other people. It had already heard of, and been amused by, his new pose. It had already been informed that he had sold his watch because he no longer cared what hour it was, and had not thought it worth while to replace the forty-two shirts stolen by the brother of his mistress. All this was very piquant. Most men of genius behaved so differently, and he was evidently a man of genius since his music was so good. And therefore his eccentricity must be respected and he himself must be "caressed." "Caressed," accordingly, he was.

"I had armed myself" (he writes) "against their raillery; but their caressing airs, which I had not expected, subjugated me so completely that I trembled like a child when they began."

It was his second success in life—more striking than the first, and sufficiently brilliant to be called a triumph. The Duc d'Aumont proposed to present him to the King, whose intention it was, he said, to grant him a pension; but he declined the honour—a course for which he assigns a curious medley of reasons. In the first place, he says, it would have involved the sacrifice of his new-born pride; in the second place, he was not sure that the

pension, if granted, would be regularly paid; in the third place, he was sure he would not know what to say to the King if he met him; in the fourth place, that embarrassing ailment of his might compel him to ask permission to retire from the royal presence before the audience was concluded.

It matters little which of the four reasons really decided his action. The King himself does not seem to have troubled to inquire, though he sent the author a hundred louis. Jean-Jacques also received fifty louis from Madame de Pompadour, a further fifty louis from the Opera, and five hundred francs from the music publisher. In spite, therefore, of his fine Republican truculence, he had, for the first time in his life, a good supply of ready money in his pocket; and he decided to spend some of it on a journey to Geneva.

Twenty-six years before he had fled from the city, in fear of a whipping, to seek fortune where he could find it. He had been long in finding it; he had hardly found it even now. But he was within sight of it; he had only, it seemed, to walk steadily and straight to reach it; he was a credit to his country, and his country knew it. He returned, with such pomp as a post-chaise might afford, in the novel character of a famous man.

CHAPTER XVIII

At Geneva Jean Jacques returns to the Protestant faith—Receives the Holy Communion Visits Madame de Warens—"My God, in what a state I found her!" Madame de Warens' distress Her appeals for help The end of her relations with Wintzenried Jean Jacques' last interview with her—Her last years—Her destitution and her death.

GENEVA received Jean-Jacques with open arms, and even accepted Thérèse—for times had changed, and the Consistory had changed with them.

Not only his remote ancestors but also his mother and most of his aunts had been dealt with by that disciplinary body for transgressions against propriety; in the case of his own far graver irregularities nothing was said and no questions were asked. Presumably the pastors assumed—though they cannot really have believed—that his mistress was only his sick nurse. Certainly they acted as if on that hypothesis; and when he proposed to revert to Protestantism, in order to recover his rights as a citizen of Geneva, no obstacles were put in his way. He was worth converting, the path of conversion was made smooth for him. He was allowed to recant in private before a Committee, told that the town would be flattered to see him receive the Holy Communion according to its rites, and called upon for a speech.

He began a speech, was overtaken by nervousness,

and broke down; and if the sentiments to which he intended to give expression were identical to those set forth in his *Confessions*, it was well for him that he did so. The excuse there offered for his apostasy is that the differences between Catholicism and Protestantism are of no importance whatsoever, since deism is common to both of them. That is practically what d'Alembert said in the article on Geneva which he contributed, a little later, to the *Encyclopædia*; and when d'Alembert said it, and assumed that the pastors of Geneva would agree with him, a hurricane burst in the Genevan teapot. Apparently it was only his opportune nervousness that saved Jean-Jacques from uttering a similar opinion and so unchaining a similar tempest.

As it was, however, everything all passed off happily. While the Consistory ignored Thérèse, society was affable to her. She and Jean-Jacques and de Luc—the same de Luc who afterwards made the first ascent of the Buet and ended his days, a nonagenarian, as reader to Queen Charlotte at Windsor—went on an excursion together, and spent a pleasant week sailing about the lake; and Jean-Jacques was so satisfied with himself and with things in general that he thought of settling down in Geneva for the remainder of his life. It was not until he got back to Paris that he changed his mind.

Meanwhile, he had not been idle, and had not, even under the influence of rude Genevan simplicity, abjured the arts. He had meditated various literary works, including a History of the Valais and a tragedy based on the story of Lucretia; he had translated, rather badly, the First Book of the *History* of Tacitus;

and he had composed, though he had not yet published, his famous Discourse on Inequality. Moreover, he had turned aside from his journey to revisit Madame de Warens. Ten years had passed since he had seen her last, and time had not treated her kindly :—

"My God!" (he exclaims) "in what a state I found her! How degraded! How little of her early virtue was left to her! Was this indeed the same Madame de Warens, so brilliant a figure in the old days, to whom the curé Pontverre had sent me? What anguish for my heart! It seemed to me that no resource remained for her but to leave the country. I pressed her urgently, but vainly, to come and live quietly with me, promising to consecrate my life and that of Thérèse to her happiness."

"My life and that of Thérèse!" Amid all the pathos of the picture, that comprehensive generosity provokes a smile—a smile that extends when one tries to imagine what the Mother Le Vasseur would have said if Madame de Warens had taken Jean-Jacques at his word. And yet it is characteristic, and quite of a piece with all that we know of Jean-Jacques' temperament, showing us in what sense he failed to realise the world about him and the men and women who peopled it. In all his adventures with women—and the end of the list of those adventures is not yet—he never came to understand love as it is generally understood. Perhaps it was because so many women had found him weak and maladroit that the desire of exclusive possession never assailed him, and he could not perceive that it might be a potent force with

rs. He had wept for Claude Anet when he in-
ed his black coat, and he had called Wintzinried his
ar brother" and sent him affectionate messages.
rèse's confession that he had had a predecessor in
affections had left him unmoved, and he had said
Why, then, should Thérèse be jealous of Madame
Warens, or Madame de Warens of Thérèse—
cially as neither of them was any longer young
eautiful? So we may have argued.

Not altogether without reason, for promiscuity
attachment was a feature of the age, and
dame de Warens had herself entertained two
rs simultaneously and rebuked them when they
out. Jean Jacques was only proposing to do for
what she had done for him; and polygamy is at
t as respectable a manifestation of altruism as
andry. But Madame de Warens declined the
. She "clung to her pension," which was only
able in Savoy, though no doubt she was swayed
other considerations also. Pride, doubtless, barred
way. She was a lady; and there are some
ifices to which a lady, however light her virtue,
however pressing her necessities, cannot bring
elf to stoop. Perhaps, too, her imagination showed
the hostile figure of the Mother Le Vasseur
ning in the distance, and she foresaw unseemly
ngles. So she went back to her poverty and
financial schemes.

These had not prospered, and were not to prosper.
story of them has been told by M. Mugnier with
ndant citation from documents; but it would be
cult to unravel the tangled skein, and hardly worth
e to try to do so. It is merely a story, long and

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days, to whom the curé Pontverre had se
What anguish for my heart! It seemed to m
no resource remained for her but to leave the c
I pressed her urgently, but vainly, to come a
quietly with me, promising to consecrate my l
that of Thérèse to her happiness."

"My life and that of Thérèse!" Amid
pathos of the picture, that comprehensive gre
provokes a smile—a smile that extends wh
tries to imagine what the Mother Le Vasseur
have said if Madame de Warens had take
Jacques at his word. And yet it is characteris
quite of a piece with all that we know of Jean-J
temperament, showing us in what sense he f
realise the world about him and the men and
who peopled it. In all his adventures with w
and the end of the list of those adventures is n
he never came to understand love as it is g
understood. Perhaps it was because so many
had found him weak and maladroit that the d
exclusive possession never assailed him, and h
not perceive that it might be a potent for

others. He had wept for Claude Anet when he inherited his black coat, and he had called Wintzinried his "dear brother" and sent him affectionate messages. Thérèse's confession that he had had a predecessor in her affections had left him unmoved, and he had said so. Why, then, should Thérèse be jealous of Madame de Warens, or Madame de Warens of Thérèse—especially as neither of them was any longer young or beautiful? So we may have argued.

Not altogether without reason, for promiscuity in attachment was a feature of the age, and Madame de Warens had herself entertained two lovers simultaneously and rebuked them when they fell out. Jean-Jacques was only proposing to do for her what she had done for him; and polygamy is at least as respectable a manifestation of altruism as polyandry. But Madame de Warens declined the offer. She "clung to her pension," which was only payable in Savoy, though no doubt she was swayed by other considerations also. Pride, doubtless, barred the way. She was a lady; and there are some sacrifices to which a lady, however light her virtue, and however pressing her necessities, cannot bring herself to stoop. Perhaps, too, her imagination showed her the hostile figure of the Mother Le Vasseur looming in the distance, and she foresaw unseemly wrangles. So she went back to her poverty and her financial schemes.

These had not prospered, and were not to prosper. The story of them has been told by M. Mugnier with abundant citation from documents; but it would be difficult to unravel the tangled skein, and hardly worth while to try to do so. It is merely a story, long and

intricate and dull, of concession hunting, con promoting, and industrial enterprise. Madam Warens, with various partners, became succes a soap boiler, an iron founder, and a coal m There were moments when success seemed v her reach, but she never quite achieved it. Posse no capital of her own, she always had to work borrowed money, and was seldom in a positi repay the loans on the appointed day. Some partners shared her losses, and others cheate Her pension was mortgaged, her rent was in ar and she had to write begging letters. She already, indeed, appealed to Jean Jacques himse help. He had sent her money more than onc less than she needed and thought she had a rig expect, and she had written to reproach him. a few months before his visit to her, he had rec this pitiful letter :—

"Your conduct fulfils for me the chapter wh have just read in the *Imitatio Christi*, in which written that our firmest hopes are those whic most completely fail us. It is not the blow wh have received from you that pains me ; it is the that inflicts it. If you will only reflect for a mo you will say to yourself all that I might say to y answer to your letter ; though, in spite of that, and always shall be to the end of my life, your good mother. . . . Good-bye."

And Wintzinried ?

He too, it seems, had proved unfaithful unkind. His name disappears from most o

biographies on the day of Jean-Jacques' departure from Savoy; but the recent researches in the archives enable us to fill the gap. The supplanter, we learn, had passed out of Madame de Warens' life as completely as the man whom he had supplanted—even more completely indeed, for he was married.

Perhaps that, if not inevitable, was at least a thing to be expected. Wintzinried was many years younger than Madame de Warens—*beau garçon*, with ambitions and pretensions; her charms were already fading when he first met her, and had since faded altogether. Such a man, in such a case, was almost certain to break away and marry; but the blow none the less fell cruelly. When he was thirty-eight and Madame de Warens was fifty-four, he appealed to her to find him a wife, and she humbled herself and did so. Then, while the negotiations for the marriage were proceeding, he compromised another young woman, and appealed to Madame de Warens to extricate him from his embarrassments. She did even this, with the result that another husband was found willing to accept the lady who had been compromised, and that the lady to whom the first advances had been made either heard nothing about the other story or saw in it no reason for withdrawing from her engagement. "I congratulate you," Madame de Warens then wrote to the bridegroom, "with all my heart"; and she added a few words of good advice:—

"It remains for you now to be very careful of your conduct, and give close thought to all the new duties which you are about to assume, so as never

again to place yourself in a position in which you will be liable either to be rejected or to incur reproach. Talk little, if you can. Think much, and always comport yourself in an irreproachable manner towards both God and man; that is the way to win the affection and esteem of the world. Pray forgive me for speaking to you so frankly, and believe that I shall always be sincerely anxious to render you any service that is in my power. I remain, truly and with much consideration, sir, your very humble and very obedient servant,

"The Baroness Warens de la Tour."

Truly a pathetic letter, read in the light which a knowledge of the circumstances sheds! The man had come to her as a travelling hair dresser, needing work and charity. He had become her servant, and risen to be her steward, her partner, her lover. Now she was an old woman fifty five years old to be precise; and he forsook her for a younger woman—for two younger women. She had stepped down from her social pinnacle, and could not step back to it; she was the ex-barber's, ex-steward's, ex lover's "obedient humble servant." Whatever her faults, she had paid the price for them, and was to go on paying them until she died.

Her own letters of the date picture her as in extreme distress; she even writes of herself as lacking "bread." That lament, perhaps, since it appears in petitions, need not be taken literally; but it at least proves the fear and the peril of destitution, and forbids us to doubt the essential truth of the story only known, until the discovery of her letters,

n Jean Jacques' narrative. This is the last glimpse
er which we get from him :

"While I was at Geneva, she went to Chablais,
came to see me at Grange Canal. She was
out money to complete her journey. I had not
necessary sum with me, but I sent it to her an
later, by Thérèse. My poor mamma! Let me
e yet another proof of the goodness of her heart.
tiny ring was the only piece of jewellery that
had left. She took it from her finger to give it
Thérèse, who instantly gave it back to her, re
ng it to the noble hand which she watered with
ears. Ah! that was the hour at which I should
discharged my debt. I ought to have abandoned
ything to follow her, to attach myself to her until
dying day, and share her fortune whatever it
t be. But I did nothing of the kind. Distracted
another attachment, I felt my affection for her
nish. . . . I mourned for her, but I did not follow
Of all the feelings of remorse that have assailed
during my life, that was the most acute, and has
the most enduring. I earned by it the terrible
shments which have never since ceased to over-
m me."

Decidedly it is tempting to comment on the
uct of the man who, in such a case, and with
a link of mutual memories, made his mistress
lmoner — who, even when sentimentalising over
gratitude, failed to see that this was an aggrava-
of it. We can only hope, if we wish to take his
that there may have been some compelling

excuse of which he has not informed us. To Madame de Warens, in any event, it must have been cruelly painful to be obliged to accept a gift conveyed by such a messenger. We see in that pathetic offer of her last ring a last desperate endeavour to maintain her crumbling dignity. Thérèse, vulgar and self-seeking though we know her to have been, becomes sympathetic, for a moment, in refusing it. The sense of tears, no less than the tears themselves, is in that story, whatever we may think of Jean Jacques' part in it.

He was never again to meet, and no longer to correspond with, the woman who had done so much for him—who had treated him so kindly, though so strangely, saved him from the sorry fate of the vagabond, tried to make him a gentleman, succeeded at least in fitting him to mix with gentlemen, and given him the leisure and the opportunity to read, and meditate, and learn. He was climbing the hill of fortune while she descended it. They must part, or she would be a drag on him; and so they parted—she hurt at his conduct, and he ashamed of it.

Parting from him, therefore,—saying her last adieus not to him but to his mistress,—she went back to her poverty and her financial schemes. For a time she lived at Evian, gazing pathetically across the Lake at the sloping hills of Vaud, her lost home, the home of her parents, her husband, and her three lovers,—trying, it may be, to collect her faltering courage and return to it. The courage never came, however; and presently she could no longer afford herself this luxury of grief. Swiss relatives whom she entreated to visit her made excuses for not

coming; and multitudinous, though unprofitable, affairs demanded her attention. She gave up her house and went back to Chambéry.

There is a story that, at this time, she became the mistress of a wealthy nobleman, the Marquis d'Allinges. It is not a very probable story—for she was fifty-six, and her charms had forsaken her—and it does not seem to be true. She lived for a little while in a house belonging to the Marquis d'Allinges; but she paid a rent for it, and his name does not appear in any other connection in the correspondence. Somebody—but certainly not the Marquis d'Allinges—made her, according to M. de Conzié, a small allowance "as long as he lived." The statement translated into English in Bayle St. John's *The Sun-Alpine Kingdom*, and then re-translated into French in the *Revue Britannique* came ultimately to be rendered "as long as he lived *with her*." That is the origin of the report, of which there is no other evidence; and there is no reason to believe that the allowance, by whomsoever made, was more than an ordinary act of charity.

The charity, beyond a doubt, was needed, and missed when it ceased to be given. It is as impossible, indeed, to make head or tail of Madame de Warens' industrial combinations in the last eight years of her life as in the earlier period; we only know that they continued, and were no more successful than at first. Of her increasing destitution, however, we have abundant testimony. We know that Wintzinried could not help her if he would, for he too was poor, earning his living as a Clerk of the Works in some road-repairing operations. We are

able to trace her from house to house, and
lodging to lodging, always driven to quit he
she could not pay the rent. We find her,
engaged in law suits, pleading *in forma pau*
We have letters in which she describes h
as crippled with gout; and we hear of her ea
small sums of money by writing begging l
on behalf of supplicants less educated than he
Jean-Jacques, so far as is known, did nothing fi
for her:—

"And so" (writes M. de Conzié) "after thi
(the loss of the small allowance above referre
"she found herself forced to beg, so to say, a
room in a cottage in one of the suburbs, and
cked out her existence by the help and char
care of neighbours, themselves in circumstance
from easy. At last, overcome by a variety of ail
which confined her to her bed for more tha
years, she succumbed with the sentiments of a
woman and a good Christian."

We know, from other sources, that the s
her poor sticks of furniture did not suffice t
her debts. There is an official letter to that
addressed to one of the claimants.

That in 1762, when Jean-Jacques, whom sh
befriended and lost sight of, was the most f
man in Europe!

CHAPTER XIX

Why Jean Jacques did not remain at Geneva—His return to Paris—Madame d'Épinay offers to lend him "The Hermitage"—He accepts the offer. The derision of the philosophers—Jean Jacques' reasons for withdrawing from society—Publishes his discourse on inequality. Analysis of the argument—Why Madame d'Épinay sought his society. Life with Thérèse and her mother—Jean-Jacques falls in love.

For how long Jean-Jacques seriously contemplated retiring to Geneva is a matter of speculation. So are his reasons for changing his mind. He himself divides the responsibility between Voltaire, Madame d'Épinay,[1] and the Mother Le Vasseur.

The last-named lady knew when she was well off, had no desire to expatriate herself, and probably had not sufficient confidence in Jean-Jacques to trust him out of her sight. Her motives, therefore, are clear, and her influence must have been direct and argumentative. The influence of Voltaire was indirect

[1] Madame d'Épinay's Memoirs are among the biographer's authorities for this period. It has been demonstrated by Mrs. Frederika Macdonald that the manuscript was extensively tampered with by Grimm and Diderot after Jean-Jacques' quarrel with them. Its damaging statements cannot, therefore, be accepted without corroboration. Mrs. Macdonald's discovery is a fine piece of literary detective work, though it need not make as much difference as she thinks to our estimate of Jean-Jacques' character. His own admissions, alike in the Correspondence and the *Confessions*, are quite sufficiently discreditable.

but not less real. He was living close to the gates of Geneva; and Jean Jacques argued that, where Voltaire was, there could be no simplicity. He "would be sure to make a revolution there." Moreover, as Jean-Jacques would have added if he had been quite candid, Voltaire was accounted a great man, and it was difficult for any other man to be accounted great when living near him. Geneva was too small a place to harbour two celebrities. They would be sure to get in each other's way; and indeed their relations were already beginning to be strained. Voltaire's compliments on Jean Jacques' literary performances had been sarcastic. He had said that the rival philosopher's glorification of the state of nature filled him with the desire to "go down on his hands and knees and crawl about the room."

Madame d'Epinay, on the other hand, was offering Jean-Jacques an inducement to stay in France. She was one of his admirers; and, as the daughter of one farmer-general of the taxes and the wife of another, she was wealthy. Her country seat at La Chevrette, near Paris, on the edge of the Forest of Montmorency, was a house of splendour and luxury; and somewhere in a corner of her spacious park there stood a dilapidated cottage which Jean-Jacques had once admired, exclaiming: "What a delightful habitation! The very place for me!" That was just before he started for Switzerland. While he was away, Madame d'Epinay had the cottage enlarged and repaired. On his return she offered it to him, saying: "My bear, there is your retreat. You chose it yourself, and friendship asks you to accept it. I trust I shall hear no more of your cruel desire to leave me."

Madame d'Epinay

And Jean-Jacques was moved, and "moistened her beneficent hand with tears," and yielded.

It may be that he had more reasons for yielding than he gives us. He may—one can almost say that he must—have dreaded the embarrassing propinquity at Geneva, not only of Voltaire, but also of Madame de Warens. Their last interviews had revealed the widening gap between them. He was a poor man, though famous, and could do but little for her. His affections were for the memory of the Madame de Warens that had been, rather than for the actual Madame de Warens, fallen from her high estate. It would be more comfortable to sentimentalise over her from a distance than to watch her distress from near at hand, and meet her constant demands for the loan of small sums of money—especially when the alternative was open to him of living the simple life within an easy walk of a grand château, and being petted by a fashionable lady. He embraced the alternative, and moved into the Hermitage before the end of the winter, taking Thérèse and her mother with him. The date was 1756, and he was forty-four years of age.

He was followed to his retreat, he says, by the gibes and jeers of the philosophers who dined with d'Holbach; but that picture was drawn long afterwards, when he was at loggerheads with them and with the world in general, and allowances for exaggeration must be made. It can mean no more than that he was chaffed, and that he was the sort of man who stood chaff badly, always suspecting that some deadly insult lurked in it—a consequence, of course, of his not having been brought up according to the rules.

And of course there were some grounds for chaff. The mere fact that he proposed to sit in the pocket of a great lady would not, indeed, by itself have aroused derision. Many eighteenth century philosophers did that. Voltaire had sat in the pocket of Madame du Châtelet, and Grimm was about to sit in the pocket of Madame d'Epinay herself. Other precedents and parallels could easily be found. But when it came to a man's sitting in a great lady's pocket together with his concubine and the mother of his concubine, then even eighteenth-century philosophers could be moved to merriment. That aspect of the case, rather than the suddenly discovered passion for solitude, must have furnished the principal motive of their mockery.

They mocked at the passion for solitude too, however, and in doing so demonstrated that they did not understand Jean Jacques. He did not, after all, intend to "live alone" in the scriptural sense of the phrase. Though he withdrew to a Hermitage, he could hardly live there as a hermit with Thérèse and Mother Le Vasseur in the house; and he was not far enough from Paris to be inaccessible to visitors. All that he had done had been to remove himself from the vortex to the outer edge of the great whirlpool; and he had reasons enough for supposing that he would be better off at that distance from the centre of social excitements.

The state of his health was one reason; the state of his purse was another. We have seen how the former reason caused him to shrink from presentation to the King; and the two reasons had often combined to make him feel uncomfortable in society. It was

a matter of common knowledge that he "suffered martyrdom" from the affliction which he tried with agonising efforts to conceal. It was partly to escape from that embarrassment that he fled to the remote corner of Madame d'Épinay's park. Moreover, he was beginning to take himself seriously.

Some cynics have taken the superficial view that he merely desired, through affectation, to figure as "the man of his book," and to "live up to" his own tirades against the sciences and the arts, and in favour of the simple life. The truth is that the country attracted him, and that, in writing and defending his thesis on the sciences and the arts, he had persuaded himself that he really had a message to the world. The years spent in town had been a necessary stage in his education. Without them he would never have learnt to write, or have realised the contrast between the imaginary simplicity of an assumed "state of nature" and the very real artificialities of the complicated civilisation of his age. By this time, however, the town had taught him all that it could teach, and it only remained for him to grope after the meaning of his lesson—to sort and marshal his ideas —to think things out.

There are plenty of men, no doubt, who think things out in towns, and even need the stimulus of the towns to make them think. They are the strong men of abounding energy, who do their thinking only with their brains. Such a man was Diderot, the most sociable of intellectual disputants, to whom all life was a debating society, and from whose mind ideas flowed fully formed in an unceasing stream. He, more than any of the others, insisted that

Jean-Jacques' retreat to the country was ridiculous. He was convinced that Jean Jacques—his favourite contributor, his most promising "young man," with the exception, perhaps, of d'Alembert,—would rust in the country; he could not conceive that, in the country, a man could do anything but rust and decline into the bucolic tone.

He would have been right about most men, but he was not right about Jean-Jacques. There is a type of thinker with whom thought is hardly to be described as an intellectual process—who dreams rather than thinks, but who finds, after he has dreamed his dreams and seen his visions, that the thought has sprung up, as it were, spontaneously, and become a fixed conviction. It was to that class of thinkers that Jean-Jacques belonged. Perhaps he was the greatest of them; certainly he was the one who made most noise in the world. Only, at the hour now under review, the dream was not yet finished. It had only just begun; and it was in order that he might dream it in peace that the dreamer took his way, with his furniture, and his concubine, and the mother of his concubine, to the cottage in the corner of Madame d'Epinay's park.

It was at about this time that he published the second of his famous discourses:

The origin of inequality among men. Is it authorised by the laws of nature?

The thesis was proposed, like the previous one, by the Academy of Dijon; but Jean-Jacques did not, on this second occasion, win the prize—for

reasons which it is easy to divine. His essay came before a jury of good *bourgeois* the sort of people who feel, and say, that they must draw the line somewhere. They drew it at attacks on property. Paradoxical assaults upon the arts and sciences might pass. They amused, and no harm was likely to come of them, since they appealed to no revolutionary instinct deeply seated in the hearts of men. But property—that was the ark of the covenant on which it was forbidden to lay sacrilegious hands. Property, at all hazards, must be protected. Nobody who questioned the rights of property should have a prize from them.

Their decision was natural enough from their own point of view; and we need not go behind their judgment. The discourse, like the essay already discussed, affords no help to the serious sociological inquirer. The description of the "state of nature" from which it starts is admitted by the author not to rest upon "historical facts." "Let us begin," he says, "by setting the facts on one side"—which clearly is equivalent to saying: "Let us assume the conclusion which we wish to prove." Very likely he would have been welcome to do so, so far as the Dijon Academicians were concerned, if he had not wished to prove too much. Demonstrations based upon reckless assumptions concerning "nature" were the commonest philosophical performances at the period. One finds them in Montesquieu and many other writers. They are all of approximately equal value as arguments, for none of them, in the last resort, amounts to much more than the assertion, sometimes grave and sometimes ironical, of the individual philosopher's point of view.

Jean-Jacques' case differed from those of the others in that he not only asserted but declaimed, and that his declamations were deliberately offensive to property-holders, and the police, and the governing classes. Take this famous passage, for instance :—

"The first man to whom it occurred to enclose a plot of land and say 'this belongs to me,' and who found people blind enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, and wars, and miseries, and murders, and horrors might have been spared to the human race if some one had torn down his fence, or filled up his ditch, exclaiming to his fellows: 'Be on your guard! Do not listen to what this impostor tells you!'"

Or this :—

"I might go on to prove that, when one beholds a small handful of wealthy and powerful persons on a pinnacle of grandeur and good fortune, while the masses cringe before them in obscurity and wretchedness, the reason is that the former only value the possessions which they enjoy because the rest of the world is deprived of them, and that, though their condition remained unaltered, they would soon cease to be happy if the people ceased to be miserable."

That is the note. Whoever has an appetite for more may turn to the discourse itself. Here we may content ourselves with noting three things concerning it : that it was not the sort of thing that the Academy of Dijon could be expected to stand ; that it seemed

very piquant to the clever people who thought they knew their Jean Jacques, and that Jean Jacques himself did not really believe in it except when consumed by the fervour of composition, seeing that at the very time when he was attacking property in his discourse, he was defending it in a contribution to the *Encyclopædia*.[1]

None the less the discourse marks a stage in his development. He was preaching to himself as well as to others; he was his own most attentive hearer; he wanted to go on listening to himself, and to profit by his own instructions. Perhaps we may put it that he wanted to develop upon natural lines, and grow to his full intellectual stature. He might, if he had liked, after his successes, have written "for the market" and made money; then, as now, a popular reputation had a commercial value, and the "pot-boiler" fetched its price. But Jean Jacques, though he meant to write, did not mean to be hurried. Writing to order was repugnant to him, though he had done it. So, when his chance came, he took it, and settled down—remote from the world, and yet not too remote from it—in Madame d'Épinay's Hermitage.

About Madame d'Épinay's reasons for wanting a philosopher in her Park, one hardly knows what to say. There is the theory that she expected him to become her lover; there is also the theory that she merely desired to perform an act of charity in a deserving case; but neither theory commands complete conviction, even though we know her to have been immoral enough to act from the former, and kind-

[1] In an article on "Political Economy."

hearted enough to have been instigated by the latter motive. Jean-Jacques was too important, too obviously capable of earning his own living, and too uncertain in his temper to benefactors for her to be likely to single him out as an object of disinterested benevolence; when she did once offer him money, he protested that she was treating him like a *valet de chambre*. Moreover, her provision of lovers was already adequate. In the past she had loved M. de Francueil, now she loved Grimm; and Jean-Jacques, who had never in his youth inspired great passions, was nearing middle age.

Still, Madame d'Épinay liked him; and he was an interesting oddity, much in request—run after by society because he ran away from it. It would be a distinction to monopolise him—to be the one *salonière* who could summon him to her presence with the certainty that he would come. His caravan—his mistress and her mother—need cause no embarrassment. They knew their place, and agreed to the convenient fiction that they were "housekeepers." He himself had a happy talent for organising musical entertainments. She could send for him to amuse her guests—and also to amuse herself when she was alone and bored. In a word, she could make him useful.

To a certain extent she did so; and his position became undignified, as he seems dimly to have perceived.

It must always be difficult for an educated man to feel dignified when living connubially with a woman of the lower orders, except, of course, when passion blinds his eyes, whether he is actually married to her

or not. His case is necessarily made worse by the presence in his house of a mother-in-law — though she be only nominally his mother-in-law — who is also of the lower orders; and Jean-Jacques had assumed that burden.

Not, indeed, that the Mother Le Vasseur was quite without education. She could at least write and spell well enough for Jean-Jacques to dictate his discourses to her. But she was a common woman, and a termagant, greedy, a liar, a mischief-maker, and a gossip. She bled her daughter's protector for the benefit of other members of her worthless family; she solicited presents, nominally for him but really for herself, behind his back; she told him to his face that those friends had tried to induce her and Thérèse to leave him, offering to start them in business as tobacconists if they would do so—a statement which was probably untrue. All this must have been very trying.

And Madame d'Épinay, in her different way, must have been trying too. She had first tried to treat Jean-Jacques as a valet by offering him a pension, if not a wage. Now she treated him as a valet in another sense by continually sending for him at inconvenient hours, without regard to the exigencies of his work and meditations, and expressing such imperious annoyance when he made excuses that he ceased to make any, and, as he says, "submitted to the yoke." He had to sit with her whenever she was tired of solitude—which was often; he had to listen to her conversation, though he declares that she never had anything to say; he had to hear and admire her literary compositions,—letters, short stories, comedies,

and the like, — which he stigmatises as "silly and vapid." He adds, it is true, that he was privileged to give her "fraternal kisses"; but that is as it may be, for one can never accept Jean Jacques' kissing stories without corroboration.

So that the life at the Hermitage, taking it for all in all, was disappointing. Madame d'Epinay was disappointing, the Mother Le Vasseur was disappointing, even Thérèse was disappointing. If Jean-Jacques had been in love with her at first, he certainly was not in love with her now; and when they walked in the woods, they had nothing to say to each other:

"We had not sufficient ideas in common to keep us supplied with subjects, and we could no longer talk unceasingly of our plans, seeing that these were limited to the enjoyment of the present hour. What we saw in our walks inspired me with reflections quite over her head. . . . There remained only the resource of gossip, slander, and silly jokes. It is, above all, in solitude that one realises the advantage of living with a companion who is capable of thinking. I did not need this resource in order to be pleased to be with her; but she needed it in order to be satisfied to be with me."

Which means, of course, that Thérèse was bored, and allowed it to be seen that she was bored; and we can hardly be wrong in assuming that Jean-Jacques was bored too.

He had his work; but he made little progress with it. He considered many projects, but carried

none to completion. His meditations, even, did not take their contemplated course — which, after all, is not surprising. He was a dreamer, not a thinker; and, though the thinker may be master of his thoughts, the dreamer is rarely master of his dreams, which any accident—the accident even of boredom and domestic jars—may divert into unexpected channels.

That was what happened to Jean-Jacques. He had gone to the Hermitage to meditate on political philosophy. Arrived there, he found himself meditating, at the age of forty-five, on the happiness which his life had missed for the lack of a grand passion :—

"I saw myself, in my declining years, a prey to painful maladies, approaching, as I supposed, the end of my career, without having fully tasted any of the pleasures after which my life hungered, without ever having given full play to the intensity which I felt was latent in it, without ever having enjoyed, or at least known, the voluptuous delights of which I felt my soul to be capable, and which, for lack of an object on which to expend my passion, had always remained locked up in my breast. . . .

"How was it that, with a soul naturally expansive, unable to live without loving, I had never yet found a true friend entirely devoted to me—though I felt myself made for friendship? How was it that, with senses so inflammable, and a heart so naturally affectionate, I had never yet, at least once in my life, been consumed with love for a specific person? Devoured by the desire to love which I had never been able

fully to gratify, I pictured myself growing old and dying without having lived."

Et cetera. The passage is the prelude to the composition of *La nouvelle Héloïse* and also to the introduction to the story of Madame d'Houdetot.

CHAPTER XX

Sophie, Comtesse d'Houdetot — Her early life and her marriage — Her love for Saint-Lambert — Madame d'Épinay on the liaison — Madame d'Houdetot's poetry — Her character — Her fidelity to her lover.

SOPHIE, Comtesse d'Houdetot, sister-in-law of Madame d'Épinay, and four years her junior, was the daughter of M. La Live de Bellegarde, another farmer-general of the taxes.

Born in December 1730, she was married in February 1748, about six weeks after her seventeenth birthday. It was on the eve of her wedding that Jean-Jacques, then only M. de Francueil's factotum, made her acquaintance at Madame d'Épinay's house, where he was arranging dramatic and musical entertainments. She invited him upstairs to inspect the bridal chamber.

It was an unusual thing to do, even in that extraordinary age; but we must not take it to imply that she was bold and bad. It implies only that she was naive, childish, innocent, impulsive—*primesautière*, in fact, as all her friends always said that she was. Jean-Jacques was more than twice her age—he was nearly thirty-six—a privileged person of inferior social standing; and her marriage was a very important event, of which she was naturally proud.

She exhibited her bridal bed in the same spirit in which another girl would have exhibited her wedding presents, and Jean Jacques, though flattered by the compliment, did not misunderstand it, and was not then inflamed by any passionate desires. Mlle de Bellegarde was only a child to him—vivacious, but not particularly pretty, kind, but of too high a rank for him, the humble dependent of her friends and relatives, to aspire. Mimi was the name by which her intimates were privileged to call her.

Her husband was two and twenty, and almost a stranger to her. Madame d'Épinay, who did not like him, describes him as "a gambler by profession, and ugly as the devil," adding that he was of low rank in the army, "quite unknown, and likely to remain so." The alliance, in short, seemed to her "ridiculous." She would have laughed at it but for her fears that "the result of the absurd story may be to make my poor Mimi unhappy"; and she proceeds:—

"It is all over, and they are married. I helped the bride to dress, this morning. She was very melancholy, and cried a great deal, begging and praying me to come and see her every day. I shall not fail to do so. I am sure she will need my presence during the first days of married life—especially of a married life like hers."

A gloomy prognostication, truly; but things were not to be quite so bad as that. M. d'Houdetot, as it turned out, was neither a brute nor a fool. He distinguished himself in the service at least sufficiently to rise to the rank of lieutenant-general; and the

worst that could be said against him was that his affections were already engaged elsewhere. He had a liaison with a married woman which was to last for another eight-and-forty years, so that, if he was not a good husband, he was at least a good lover — which is something to his credit; and he was at any rate as good a husband as the existence of other claims allowed. His behaviour was widely different from that of M. d'Épinay, who brought his mistresses — women of the theatre — to live in the immediate vicinity of his wife's country seat, and introduced them to the parish priest as persons whose unimpeachable respectability he could guarantee. He treated Madame d'Houdetot with all the respect that was compatible with infidelity, and cheerily allowed her a freedom equal to his own. "Madam," he said to a lady who came to him with scandalous reports about her conduct, "I have no right to demand more from Madame d'Houdetot than that she should maintain the outward appearance of propriety."

Some women would have been unhappy under those conditions; but not many women of the eighteenth century. Madame d'Houdetot certainly was not. The shock of the first disappointment over, the tears of which Madame d'Épinay tells us were very quickly dried. If M. d'Houdetot was not in love with his wife, neither was his wife in love with him. She bore him children, and then, having discharged that duty, looked about for consolations, which were not difficult to find. She was a lovable little woman, with the lovableness of a wayward, affectionate child, seeming sometimes to be silly because she was so naive, but in reality bright and intelligent, and, above

all impulsive *primesautière* a good talker, an
a poet, some of whose lyrics are full of charm.
women are likely to have lovers, whether they
or not; and as Madame d'Houdetot did wish
as M. d'Houdetot raised no objections, the inc
happened.

The inevitable was Saint Lambert.

He was thirteen years Madame d'Houdetot's
a soldier, and also a poet a colonel in the
service, and also the author of a pastoral on the Se

For a soldier to write poetry unless it be
for a comic opera—is, in England, account
indication of effeminacy. In France it is est
a sign of intellectual distinction, and adds
laurels and the interest which he inspires.
have been worse and better poets, as there
been worse and better soldiers, than Colonel
Lambert; but he carried his double reputation
fully, and was welcome in the salons alike as a
and as a gallant. Belonging to the party
philosophers, he talked atheism with more
and eloquence than any of them; and he ha
a fame as a lady killer which they did not enj
was his portrait that Voltaire and M. du C
found under Madame du Châtelet's pillow
occasion on which that lady's lover was mo
remark to her husband. "This, I fear, is an adv
which does not redound to the honour of eit
us." It was to him, too, that Voltaire referred
Marmontel asked him of what Madame du C
had died, and he answered: "Don't you kno
friend? Don't you understand? The brute
her by making her a mother."

All Paris knew that story, and Saint-Lambert was reckoned the hero of it. The story launched him in Paris when he came there from Lorraine. He was the great conqueror, by whom it was an honour to be conquered. He had delightful manners, acquired at the Court of Lunéville. The field of gallantry was open to him. He might have one mistress or many; he had but to choose. He chose to have one only, and chose that that one should be Madame d'Houdetot.

There does not seem to have been any interval of doubt or hesitation. Of a sudden we find Madame d'Epinay writing:—

"The Comtesse d'Houdetot is coming to spend a week with us; she is not going to her country place this year. It seems to me that she has become intimate—very intimate indeed—with M. de Saint-Lambert. She speaks of no one but him; she quotes no one but him. Her enthusiasm is so open and so extreme that the Count might very well be annoyed by it. She says he is dying with anxiety to be presented to me; but this anxiety has not overtaken him suddenly, for I have known him for the last two years, and he has never said a word to me about it. However that may be, she is going to bring him, and I am curious to see them together."

The curiosity was gratified. Two other passages, undated, but evidently only a little posterior to that quoted, help to complete the picture:—

"The Comtesse d'Houdetot came yesterday to say good-bye to me. What a sweet creature she is

so naive, so sympathetic, so straightforward! She is wild with joy at the thought of her husband's departure, and truly she inspires so much interest that we all feel happy on her behalf."

And presently:—

"Yesterday the Comtesse d'Houdetot came to supper with us. She was accompanied by the Marquis de Saint Lambert, who had just told me that he was leaving to join the army. Madame d'Houdetot is in despair about it, not having expected this separation. She has lost all self control, and lets her grief be seen with a frankness which may be very much to her credit, but is, at the same time, very embarrassing to her friends. Ah, how glad I shall be to see that woman ten years older! If only she could learn how to moderate her transports a little, she would be an angel."

And thirdly:—

"The Countess is much upset at the Marquis' absence; but when did trouble ever disturb her gaiety? She cries in perfectly good faith, and then, in equally good faith, she laughs. She was more emphatically born to be happy than any other woman whom I know."

There, in those three extracts, we have her portrait. There is no trace in it of the shame, or intensity, or gloom, or violence of a guilty passion. It is fragrant of the innocence of a virgin heart awakening to love

for the first time. It suggests, not adulterous intrigue, but the joyous realisation of the romantic dreams of girlhood.

That, as we shall see, is the note of Madame d'Houdetot throughout her life. Her marriage had been a mistake to be lived down and repaired—a nightmare to be forgotten. It had not seared her heart or embittered her disposition; it had only postponed for a year or two the dawn of her real happiness. Her temper remained sweet, and the wound was fully healed long before she was too old to love and to enjoy. Those who knew her when Saint-Lambert came into her life declared that she then grew "more amiable than ever"; and she had no more thought of doing wrong than has the maiden who gives her heart to a suitor *pour le bon motif*. To have told her that she ought not to love Saint-Lambert would have been as idle as to tell a mother that she ought not to love her children.

No doubt she was "silly" about him—that was in her character. She was silly, as Madame d'Épinay says, in writing to the mistress of the Prince de Soubise to ask her to persuade her protector to bring or send Saint Lambert back from the army to Paris. In some other respects, too, she was capable, under her lover's influence, of indiscretion which verged upon indecorum. One of Diderot's letters to Mlle Volland tells how she recited, at a certain evening party, a certain "Hymne aux tétons" which he describes as "sparkling with voluptuousness," adding: "Though she had the courage to show it to me, I did not dare to ask her for a copy of it."

That, however, was an exceptional—perhaps an

isolated concession to her delight in the nev
that she had learnt. There is even a chanc
the story may not be true. The general ver
her contemporaries is that she remained unspot
the world. Even Diderot, wit, cynic, and deba
pays her that tribute. Though "she lived
atheists and pious people and prudes, she conti
he says, "to be just herself", and the few scraps
poetry that have been preserved, while they a
of the joy of living and loving, and reflect ali
candour and the whimsicality of the age, do n
the one piece of which we hear from Diderot, p
bounds of the permissible. There can be no h
quoting this, written, as one supposes, one day
Saint-Lambert was suddenly summoned to the
war :—

"L'amant que j'adore,
Prêt à me quitter,
D'un instant encore
Voudrait profiter
Pelote vaine,
Qu'on ne peut saisir,
Trop près de la peine
Pour être un plaisir."

It may not be—it is not great poetry; b
woman herself is in it. We see her there—laugh
crying, and crying and laughing—and always, w
she cried or laughed, very happy, because lovi
for her the most natural and right and rea
thing in the world, and because she was as sure
lover as of herself.

She had every title to be sure of him, as ti
slowly and conclusively to show. His affecti

wandered far and wide before he met her, but afterwards they strayed no more. Nowhere in the annals of love, legitimate or illicit, do we find the story of an attachment so passionate and yet so tranquil, so long enduring and so little disturbed by jealousy. From giddy youth until extreme old age, they continued to live only for each other, models of fidelity in an unfaithful age. Their contemporaries talked of them as we talk of Darby and Joan, admiring a virtue which they dared not hope to emulate. Nothing like it, if we may judge from the chorus of enthusiasm, had ever been known in France before, or was thought likely ever to be known again.

Was this close attachment ever, for a single instant, in any peril? Looking back on it, and recalling the legend of it, one finds it hard to think so—hard even to believe that Jean-Jacques himself ever thought so. Surely, one feels, some instinct must have warned him that the fortress which he assailed was inexpugnable!

It ought to have done so, and perhaps it did; but, after all, he did not know all that we know. He may have thought that the liaison had lasted a very long time, when, in truth, it had only run an imperceptible fraction of its course; he may have thought that it was near its end, and needed but a little to end it.

He was living alone, we must remember, in a forest. He had no one to talk to; he was tired of Thérèse; he was dreaming of the grand passion which he had never known—not only dreaming of it but writing of it; he had always "wanted Princesses," and he had reached the age when a man feels that he must make haste if he is to capture love before it is too late.

That was his condition—those were his circumstances—when Madame d'Houdetot reappeared to him, like a creature of his imagination made incarnate; and the rest followed like a conclusion from its premises. He forgot the resolution, registered in the *Confessions*, never to "expose Thérèse to the pain of seeing me express for another sentiments more passionate than she was capable of inspiring." He forgot everything, and could not help himself; but rushed blindly on his doom.

CHAPTER XXI

Madame d'Houdetot at Eaubonne—She calls on Jean Jacques at the Hermitage—She calls again while Saint Lambert is at the seat of war—"This time" (writes Jean Jacques) "I was in love"—She was "silly" and she was "nice"—Secret meetings in the forest—Correspondence—Extracts from Madame d'Houdetot's letters.

MADAME D'HOUDETOT was living at Eaubonne, within a walk—though rather a long walk—of the Hermitage. Her pretext was a desire to be near Paris and her sister-in-law while her husband was away on foreign service; her actual reason, that Saint-Lambert had a place in the neighbourhood. M. d'Houdetot, as we know, was indifferent to her movements so long as the appearance of decorum was preserved; even in this matter of decorum he was easily satisfied. Saint-Lambert, however, at the time of which we are speaking, was also abroad; and that was Jean-Jacques' opportunity. He knew all about the liaison from Madame d'Epinay and from Saint-Lambert himself. But he was tempted, and fell; or, at all events, he tried to fall.

He had never called on Madame d'Houdetot in Paris, though he had been asked to do so; but he met her from time to time at La Chevrette. They were both fond of walking—not a common taste of the period—and were somewhat thrown together in consequence. We have a note, dated May 1756,—it is

wrongly dated in Streckeisen-Moulton's collection,[1]—in which she tells him that she will be dining at La Chevrette on such-and-such a day and hopes to meet him there. Already at that time, therefore, they were on friendly, though not yet on confidential, terms. The great lady was patronising the great man; she liked his out-of-door habits, and enjoyed his eloquent conversation; but the great lady was no more to the great man than any other great lady of his acquaintance. He had only just come to the Hermitage, and solitude had not yet begun to pall upon him.

Nine months elapsed; and then, one day, suddenly and without warning, the great lady surprised the philosopher in his retreat. The date is wrongly given in the *Confessions* as August 1756; the visit really took place, as can be determined from the correspondence, in the dead of winter—in January or February 1757. Madame d'Houdetot's carriage had stuck in the mud; she was wet through, and came to the Hermitage for help. Jean Jacques entertained her at a "rustic collation," and Thérèse provided her with a change of clothes. The clothes were duly returned, a few days afterwards, together with a letter of thanks:—

"I am very sorry" (Madame d'Houdetot wrote) "that I have seen so little of you. Remain in your forest, since it is your choice to do so, but permit us to pity ourselves because you are so happy there. I should pity myself less if my time were more my own and if I were always sure that my company did not bore you.

[1] *J. J. Rousseau: ses amis et ses ennemis.* Correspondance publiée par M. G. Streckeisen Moulton.

"Good-bye, my dear citizen. Please thank Mademoiselle Le Vasseur for taking such good care of me."

Is it the letter of a woman who merely wishes to be polite, or of a woman who is bored and wants a man to amuse her? Mere politeness was a little apt to find expression in such terms in the eighteenth century, but the latter motive was probably present also. Saint-Lambert was away, and Madame d'Houdetot was lonely. She wanted some one to talk to her about Saint-Lambert. Probably she also wanted some one to sit at her feet—some one, for choice, with whom she would feel quite safe.

She felt—she must have felt—quite safe with Jean-Jacques. He was nearly old enough to be her father; and he had no renown for gallantry. The declaration to Madame Dupin, which had ended so ignominiously in his confessing himself "an object of disgust," was an old, old story, and there is no reason to suppose that Madame d'Houdetot had heard it. Since then he had been living in quiet concubinage with his "housekeeper"—whose feelings naturally would not count in the eyes of a great lady. Without being in the least cold or callous, she would fail to understand that such people had feelings where delicate matters of sentiment were concerned. What she did understand was that Jean-Jacques was an interesting eccentric, amiable and eloquent, and fond, as she was, of walking in the woods. So she soon came to see him again—not after an interval of nine months, as is stated in the *Confessions*, but as soon as the spring weather made the woods accessible.

This time she was on horseback, riding astride, attired in male costume.

"As a rule" (writes Jean Jacques) "I do not care for this kind of masquerade; but the romantic air of the thing impressed me, and this time I was in love."

He was then, we must remember, writing *La nouvelle Héloïse*, and was in the fierce fever of composition. He had peopled his solitude with the creatures of his imagination; he was living not with Thérèse but with his heroines; he was not analysing his heroines but idealising them. He was in love with his ideal; and when Madame d'Houdetot rode up the avenue, it was as though his own ideal, made flesh, had come to greet him.

She was not beautiful, as he admits. The small-pox had marked her, or had at least destroyed the freshness of her complexion. But she first "looked down" demurely; and then, when she looked up, "the expression of her face, at once gentle and animated, seemed to speak of caresses." Her hair was her great glory. Its curls were natural; and it fell, when unfastened, almost to her ankles. Her figure was slim and her movements piquant alike in their awkwardness and their grace. She spoke, and she was witty, and merry, and frank, and naive. Jean-Jacques "drank the poisoned cup in long draughts, only perceiving how sweet it was." She left him, and he found that, when he tried to think of his imaginary "Julie," he could only think of her. "My eyes," he says, "were opened. I recognised my misfortune. I lamented it, but I did not foresee its consequences."

Perhaps it was Madame d'Houdetot's fault that there were any consequences. Jean-Jacques "hesitated," he says, as to the course to be pursued. Hesitation might have preluded forgetfulness, and he might have gone back to his dreams if Madame d'Houdetot had left him hesitating. But she did not—whether because she was blind and could not see, or, as is more likely, because she was a coquette and did not choose to see, finding the novel experience irresistible, enjoying this visible proof of a young woman's power over a middle-aged philosopher. She called for the third time, and then Jean-Jacques could hesitate no longer:—

"Then" (he says) "I knew how I must behave. Shame, the handmaid of evil, made me stand dumb and trembling before her. I dared not open my mouth or lift my eyes. I felt a trouble to which I could not give expression but which it was impossible for her not to see. I decided to admit my trouble and leave her to guess the cause of it. That was a sufficiently clear explanation for her."

Let us not wrong Jean-Jacques—especially let us not wrong Madame d'Houdetot—by supposing that the explanation was inadequate. It is a question how far she meant to go; the probability is that she went farther than she meant; but she certainly saw what sort of game she was playing, and played it with deliberation. The story, in its beginnings, is assuredly an anticipation of the story of Lady Clara Vere de Vere breaking a country heart for pastime. It differs from that story in that Jean-Jacques was more enter-

prising than the "country clown," and allowed renown to be won of him because he expected, and tried hard, to win renown himself.

Love was in this case, if ever it was, a kind of war—perhaps a kind of siege rather, in which the original assailant was thrown on the defensive and had to resist an assault that was pressed with unscrupulous vigour.

Jean-Jacques had two advantages in the encounter: he was a distinguished man who did not underrate his own importance; and he was considerably Madame d'Houdetot's senior. If the play had been earnest and her own heart had been one of the stakes, a younger man, though less distinguished, might have had a better chance of winning it; but as the game was not on her part serious, a younger man would have been easier to snub and to stop when he tried to go too far. Madame d'Houdetot's case was somewhat like that of the schoolgirl with whom the music-master presumes. The case is simple when no encouragement has been given but embarrassing when the girl is conscious of having made provocative advances. Then she finds it difficult to arrest the unexpected ardour of her wooer's suit. She wants to be "nice," feels that she ought to be rude, and, fearing to be too cruel, is apt to end by not being cruel enough. That, broadly speaking, was Madame d'Houdetot's position.

Not, of course, that she was a child, without experience in matters of the heart—far, very far, from that. But she was "silly" and she was "nice." She liked to amuse herself, but she hated to give pain; and, having sought only for a tribute of cere-

monious compliments and homage, she found that she had aroused vehement and even unscrupulous passion. Jean-Jacques was more ambitious and more in earnest than she had expected him to be. He aspired, making no secret of the aspiration, to all a lover's privileges. Her problem was to manœuvre herself out of a false position without ostensibly withdrawing from it—to refuse while apparently consenting, and to avoid doing violence to Jean-Jacques' feelings while remaining true to Saint-Lambert. Other women, before and after her, have found the solution of such problems difficult.

Madame d'Houdetot solved her problem—or had it solved for her—in the end; but she spent nine months in looking for the solution. During that period she and Jean-Jacques saw each other nearly every day. They made appointments to meet in the woods, without the knowledge, as they believed, of either Thérèse or Madame d'Epinay. They also met openly, by appointment, in Madame d'Epinay's drawing-room; and Jean-Jacques was invited to dine, to sup—and even to sleep—at Eaubonne. When it was inconvenient for them to meet, they corresponded.

Jean-Jacques' letters, with some exceptions to be noted, have been lost; those of Madame d'Houdetot have been preserved. If they were our only authority for the story, we should not be able to make much of it. They are not, in any sense, love letters; on the contrary, they are extremely proper and discreet. A reader's suspicion might be aroused by their length and their frequency, but certainly not by their contents.

Madame d'Houdetot inquires in them about her correspondent's health, and issues bulletins about her own, confiding to him that she has taken medicine with satisfactory results. She reminds him that he has been doing some copying for her, asks to be informed how much she owes him for it, humours him, for awhile, in his proud refusal to accept payment from her for his services, but finally insists upon settling the account on the ground that "it is only right that every man should live by his trade." She insists, too, that he shall not prepay the postage of his letters to her but shall leave her to bear the charge; and she offers to help him to conceal any compromising documents that he may have in his possession: "Give them to the curé of Deuil, in an envelope addressed to me, and tell him to keep them until one of us sends for them."

In all her letters, moreover, she keeps Saint-Lambert to the fore. Jean-Jacques may or may not have been sedulous in his inquiries after the state of his rival's health, but Madame d'Houdetot never fails to furnish him with the latest reports on the subject. For instance:—

"My friend is still at Aix. The waters are still doing him good. As for me, I am very melancholy here, separated from him, and not expecting to feel happy until I see him again."

Again:—

"The health of my friend gets better and better—a fact which has contributed materially to the improvement of my own."

And yet again :—

"As for him on whose health my own depends even more than on myself, I am glad to be able to tell you that he feels a sensible amelioration in the parts affected."

Such passages as these are eloquent of the state of the writer's heart ; and there are many other passages in which she seems to define clearly enough for the most dense to comprehend the difference in her feelings for the old friend and for the new one :—

"You know my heart ; you know how it is occupied. But I have promised you, and I shall always continue to feel for you, the friendship for which there is still room in a life thus monopolised."

"Yes, my friend, you must continue to be the man that you have always seemed to be. You have seen how devotedly we love each other, and our friendship is not unworthy of you. Believe me, my friend, no secret of your heart has been unobserved by me, sensible as I am to virtue and to tender and honourable sentiments. I can no more fail in my duty to love than to friendship. Your friendship adds to the happiness of my life, already made happy by love. I enjoy the pleasure of seeing love and friendship unite to embellish my days and to bring me all the felicity of which a sympathetic soul is capable. If there were anything that I could wish for, it would be to have a friend like you and a lover like him."

"Keep this letter, my friend. Let it be the first pledge of the sentiments which I shall always preserve for you, and of a friendship approved by him whom I love—a friendship in which he invites me to indulge and which he wishes to share—and which I shall do my best to make worthy of both of you. All my life, my dear citizen, I shall remember how you told me, with conviction in your manner, that my love for him would count henceforward as one of my virtues. Ah, never forget that speech, which is a fresh tie between us and which it was such a delight to me to hear."

Such passages abound in the letters. They make it perfectly clear that Madame d'Houdetot was not at all in love with Jean-Jacques but was very much in love with Saint-Lambert. What one could not infer from them, if no other evidence were available, is that Jean-Jacques was in love with Madame d'Houdetot, that she had given him more encouragement than was good for her peace of mind, and that he was presuming and making advances which she found it increasingly more difficult to repel without an open breach.

Perhaps one might have deduced something from some of the later letters: from the letter in which Madame d'Houdetot exhorts Jean-Jacques to "be calm and get to work"; and especially from the letter in which, after expressing respect for his virtue, she concludes by saying that "though we are likely to see less of each other for the future, that will only make our relations more tranquil, and we shall be better friends than before." That does at least imply that coldness has at last supervened where warmer feelings

have previously prevailed. Yet, after all, it would have told us little, and would have left the situation mysteriously dark. There would never have emerged from it the full picture of Madame d'Houdetot overtaken by the tide of a middle-aged man's unrequited passion, and trying to check it by means of a discreet but voluminous correspondence in a manner recalling the old story of Mrs. Partington and the broom and the Atlantic Ocean.

That, however, is the picture which results when all the depositions of all the witnesses are collected and compared: the depositions of Jean-Jacques himself in his *Confessions* and in such of his letters as have not been destroyed, of Grimm in his correspondence, and of Madame d'Épinay in her Memoirs. Their testimony does not always concord. They did not all know everything, and it does not seem that they were all determined, at all hazards and at all times, to tell the truth; but the discrepancies are of no grave importance, and we will make what we can of their narratives.

CHAPTER XXII

Madame d'Houdetot talks to Jean-Jacques about Saint Lambert—Jean-Jacques corresponds with Saint Lambert, who suspects nothing—The crisis—A memorable evening under the acacias—Jean-Jacques as Don Juan—And as Saint Anthony—His own account of the incident—Madame d'Houdetot's account—She "ran a certain risk"—Saint-Lambert hears a rumour of what has been happening—He hurries back.

SAINT-LAMBERT was at the seat of war when Jean-Jacques was seized by his sudden passion for Madame d'Houdetot, and Madame d'Épinay was in Paris; so that there were no prying eyes to watch the proceedings except those of Thérèse, and the gardeners, and the other servants. The servants doubtless gossiped with each other, but had no one as yet to whom to carry tales; and Thérèse was accustomed to be left at home when Jean-Jacques went to call upon grand ladies. Before becoming jealous, she had to realise that the case was exceptional; and that took time. Meanwhile, the sap of the spring was in Jean-Jacques' blood, and Madame d'Houdetot was "leading him on." Hardly a day passed on which they did not walk and talk in the parks, the gardens, and the forest: he desperately in earnest; she much amused, and even pleased and flattered, provoking, but yet evasive, sometimes seemingly about to yield, but never yielding.

They talked, of course, of the novel that Jean-Jacques was writing. He was full of it, and liked to

read it aloud as he proceeded. He had been reading it to Thérèse and the Mother Le Vasseur; but that was not very satisfactory. Thérèse sobbed over the pathos with harrowed feelings but without understanding what it was all about. The Mother Le Vasseur, unmoved but deferential, wagged her aged head, remarking at intervals, "Very fine, sir; very fine indeed!" Madame d'Houdetot was a more satisfactory listener. She was *âme sensible*, and her praise was praise indeed; and the story was ideally fit for sentimental use. It told of love—of illicit and forbidden love made sacred by its intensity—of just such a passion as the reader cherished for his hearer. It gave an opening. The very reading of it was a veiled declaration—personal or impersonal as the reader and the hearer chose.

That was one of their subjects. The other—they had only two—was Saint-Lambert.

We should have guessed that from Madame d'Houdetot's letters; we do not need to guess, for Jean-Jacques has told us. His passion, he tells us, was in some sense—a very strange sense—shared. It was "equal, though not reciprocal." In fact, "We were both of us drunk with love—she for her lover, and I for her; we mingled our sighs and our tears." She confided in him, in short, as she might have confided in a woman, doing her best, she may have thought, to prevent him from aspiring, yet sufficiently a coquette not to be entirely displeased at the discovery that he did aspire, and giving him therefore not too much encouragement but just encouragement enough.

Sometimes he was humble and hopeless; but his

very hopelessness led him into casuistry. Since his attempts were doomed to failure, there could, he argued, be no harm in making them :—

"Why should I feel any scruples, I asked myself, about indulging a mad passion which can injure no one but myself? Am I a young gallant whose attentions to Madame d'Houdetot need cause alarm? Is there not something presumptuous in my remorse, implying that my manners, my bearing, and my attire are likely to seduce her? Ah, poor Jean-Jacques! You may go on loving with an easy conscience and without any fear that your sighs will trouble Saint-Lambert."

That was one of his moods. It possessed him so completely at its hour that he wanted Saint-Lambert as well as Madame d'Houdetot to take him for a confidant. There is a letter in which he begins by lecturing Saint-Lambert and ends by making allowances for him :—

"I disapprove of your attachment. You cannot approve of it yourself; and, as long as you are both equally my friends, I can never allow you to enjoy the security of innocence in your affection. Only I know that such a love as yours merits indulgence, and that the good which results from it removes a portion of its guilt."

There is another letter in which, far from censuring the attachment, he exalts it in dithyrambic style :—

"Our common friend came here on Tuesday to say good-bye to the valley. I spent a melancholy yet de-

lightful afternoon with her. Our hearts had your image between them, and our eyes were not dry when we spoke of you. I told her that her attachment to you would rank henceforward as a virtue. She was so touched by the sentiment that she asked me to put it in writing, and I willingly obeyed her. Bless you, my children, and may you ever be united! There are no other souls as choice as yours, and you deserve to love each other until the grave closes over you."

And elsewhere he writes:—

"If you should ever be false to such a mistress, I could not but regard you with contempt."

And then again, reporting, as it were, his own relations with his friend's mistress:—

"I was invited to her house four years before I set foot in it. In the end I could not help seeing her. I saw her; I fell into the pleasant habit of seeing her frequently. I was alone and in a melancholy mood, my afflicted heart seeking only for consolation. I found it in her society, and she needed consolation in her turn. She found in me a friend who sympathised with her in her troubles."

One would infer from that, if there were no other records, that Jean-Jacques knew his place and kept it, recognised from the first that his love, if he dared to love, would be vain, and was far too virtuous and chivalrous ever willingly to give ground for jealousy. Saint-Lambert himself seems to have drawn the inference and cherished the belief until he could cherish it

no longer. Perhaps his vanity sustained him. One can picture him ridiculing the idea that a soldier should be jealous of a philosopher—especially of an eccentric philosopher who was also a hermit, living in a forest in concubinage with a daughter of the people.

Yet there were grounds, if not for uneasiness, at least for anger and dissatisfaction. Madame d'Houdetot was running risks and making herself ridiculous. Jean-Jacques' behaviour with her was very different from what he gave his correspondent to understand. He was not merely a friend; he was not merely a sentimentalist; he desired, and sought, a good deal more than the consolations of sociability; his passions were stronger than either his virtues or his chivalry.

He dwells, at length and in detail, upon the physical symptoms of his passion; but the description must not be quoted. It recalls one of the passages in *Peregrine Pickle* least suitable for general reading; and it shows that Jean-Jacques desired like a satyr even while he talked like a philosopher. The thought of Madame d'Houdetot's kisses—he says that he was privileged to kiss her—inflamed him so that he could not contain himself. Duty, chivalry, virtue—all these things were nothing in the scale. If he did not betray the friend whose privileged passion had inspired him to ecstatic prose, only one reason withheld him—the invincible reason that he could not.

We have his admission that he tried; we have also his boast that he very nearly succeeded.

"It is about a league" (he writes) "from the Hermitage to Eaubonne. In the course of my

frequent visits it often happened that I slept there. One evening, having supped *tête-à-tête*, we went out to walk in the garden in the moonlight. At the end of the garden there was a fairly large shrubbery, through which we took our way to a pretty clump of trees, embellished with a cascade which I had suggested and which she had had arranged. What an immortal memorial of innocence and joy! It was while we were together in this wood, seated on a bank of grass beneath an acacia in flower, that I found language truly worthy to render the emotions of my heart. It was the first and only time in my life that I ever did so; but I was sublime, if the word may be applied to the most passionate and seductive expression that the most tender and ardent love can elicit from the human heart. What intoxicating tears fell from my eyes upon her knees! What tears she too, in her turn, could not refrain from shedding! At last she exclaimed, with a sudden outburst of spontaneous emotion, 'No, never was there a lover who loved as you do! But your friend Saint-Lambert overhears us, and it is impossible to my heart to love more than once.' I sighed and kept silent; I kissed her. Ah, what a kiss it was! But that was all. She had been living for six months alone—separated from her husband and her lover. For three months we had seen each other every day, with love always present as a third in our company. We had supped *tête-à-tête*; we were alone in the woods by moonlight; and yet, after two hours of the most passionate and tender talk, she left the shrubbery at midnight, and at the same time quitted the arms of her friend as intact, as pure in body and soul, as when she entered it. If my

readers will weigh all the circumstances, I need say no more."

"Weigh all the circumstances"—the implication of the words is clear. Jean-Jacques had begun like Don Juan and ended like Saint Anthony; and he demands the honour due to Saint Anthony and Don Juan both. He has been merciful as he has been strong; she would have yielded, but he would not let her; he has given his proofs in the lists, but has remembered to be magnanimous at the eleventh hour. And, on reflection, he regrets his magnanimity, feeling that he has earned a debt of gratitude which had not been paid. That is the verdict which he solemnly delivers after summing up in his own case; but Madame d'Houdetot's evidence does not quite support it. Long afterwards, when Jean-Jacques was dead and the *Confessions* had been published, she allowed herself to be questioned on the subject by Népomucène Lemercier;[1] and this is what she told him:—

"Yes" (she said), "it was quite true that she ran a certain risk upon that memorable evening, but she was saved by the unexpected objurgations of a carter passing on the other side of the wall of the park and whipping up his horse. A peal of the frank, merry laughter of youth rang from her lips. Rousseau shook and trembled with rage and shame, and poetry remained the undisputed mistress of the night."

[1] A dramatist, author of *Le Tartufe révolutionnaire* and many other pieces.

The peril, one feels, cannot have been very grave if the laughter that conjured it was so easily evoked. Probably Madame d'Houdetot exaggerated it in her old age, hypnotised, as it were, by Jean-Jacques' world-wide renown, and feeling that it was rather to her credit than to her shame to have been moved by the declaration of so great a man. Had she not her reputation as *âme sensible* to keep up? But the story as she tells it has the ring of truth, and suggests, as the version given in the *Confessions* does not, the recollection of things as they really happened.

Whichever version we accept, however, the incident marks the climax of the drama. Jean-Jacques was never again to come so near to winning the laurels of Don Juan—never again to be called upon to resist the temptations of Saint Anthony. Prying eyes were watching him, and the neighbours had begun to talk. Rumour was on the wing. Saint-Lambert was about to learn what had been happening in his absence—to receive, no doubt, a magnified and distorted version of the events—and to come hurrying home.

According to Jean-Jacques, Madame d'Épinay was jealous, and betrayed him. She questioned Thérèse, he says. She asked Thérèse to show her the letters which she brought for Jean-Jacques when he was staying at La Chevrette, and when Thérèse refused, she searched for them in the pockets of her apron. She also, he tells us, went to the Hermitage and ransacked his study to read his correspondence in his absence. Finally, he opines, though he admits that he has no proof, having accumulated her informa-

tion, she sat down and wrote to Saint Lambert. It is possible. The allegation certainly cannot be disproved. But it is improbable. The lack of motive is against it.

Jealousy, in the ordinary sense of the word, can hardly have been present. There is no reason to believe that Madame d'Epinay was in love with Jean-Jacques; there is every reason to believe that she was in love with Grimm. The *spretæ injuria formæ* is, therefore, a motive to be set aside; and Madame d'Epinay can, at the most, have been no more than piqued to see her own particular philosopher, whom she had placed under an obligation, forgetting to dance attendance on her, and neglecting her house for another. That might displease her. Her displeasure might be the greater to see her sister-in-law making, as she would say, a goose of herself with a man who, however distinguished, was not of her own social rank. But this feeling, even when fortified by curiosity, would hardly have impelled her to break the seals of her sister-in-law's letters. She was a lady. In judging the probabilities, we must bear that fact in mind.

Nor was there any need for her to open letters. She could learn all that she wanted to know in other ways; she could hardly avoid learning it whether she inquired or not. Jean-Jacques tells us that there was no attempt at concealment on his part; we may be quite sure that there was none on the part of Thérèse; and we know that Thérèse went to La Chevrette on Jean-Jacques' errands. Of course she gossiped in the servants' hall; of course the servants repeated the gossip until it reached Madame d'Epinay; of course

Madame d'Épinay thereafter kept her eyes and her ears open; of course she wrote about what she had seen and heard to Grimm, who was with the army and in the habit of meeting Saint-Lambert. Those are the channels through which the information would most naturally filter. We have only to turn to Madame d'Épinay's correspondence with Grimm to see that it actually was transmitted in that way.

The letters are probably not arranged in their right order, and there is no possibility of ascertaining what the right order is. Taken in any order, however, they make Madame d'Épinay's point of view quite clear. She is annoyed at what is happening; she is especially annoyed that her sister-in-law is the subject of scandalous gossip; she has had to exert her authority and tell people not to talk so much; but she wants to pooh-pooh the matter and make as light of it as she can. She has traced the scandal to Thérèse, who is "jealous, silly, a liar, and a gossip." If the Countess has walked in the forest with Jean-Jacques, she is quite sure that she has had no other object than to "philosophise about morality, virtue, love, friendship, and all the rest of it." As for the hermit, he may have had grosser aims, but "she is sure not to have noticed that"; she is "too silly for words," but she does not mean any harm.

In other letters there are more details; and here the pique, such as it is, appears:—

"Rousseau hardly ever comes to see me nowadays. He spends all his time with the Comtesse d'Houdetot. He only dined here once while the Baron was staying with us.

"The Countess has just arrived."

"They tell me that Rousseau and the C
continue their mysterious meetings in the
Three days ago he sent a message by the gard
say that he could not come to see me because
ill. The same evening I sent some one round
Countess' house. There he was established wi
tête-à-tête, and there he had been for the last tw
Yesterday he came to spend the day with
struck me that his manner was embarrassed."

Et cetera; and since Madame d'Epin
writing this sort of thing to Grimm, and since
was liable at any time to meet Saint-Lam
seems superfluous to suppose that Saint-La
darkness was illuminated by an anonymous
whether written, as Jean-Jacques says, by M
d'Épinay, or, as Madame d'Épinay says, by T
If Thérèse had written—she wrote with great
seldom spelling a word correctly—her an
would easily have been pierced, and her secre
not have been likely to be kept. Madame d'
had only to write to Grimm and leave Gri
do the rest, as one of her letters and one
answers thereto make clear:—

"Mlle Le Vasseur" (she writes) "came to
yesterday. She told me that, a few da
Rousseau had a frightful quarrel with M. D

[1] A contributor to the *Encyclopædia* and the *Journa*
plique. Elected a member of the Convention, he vote
death of the King.

and almost kicked him out. He talks aloud all night long, and no one can understand him. Mlle Le Vasseur assures me that the Comtesse d'Houdetot comes to call on the hermit nearly every day. She leaves her servants in the forest and comes and goes alone. The little Le Vasseur is jealous."

To which Grimm replies :—

"What you tell me about Rousseau strikes me as very remarkable, and these mysterious visits of the Countess to him are still more so."

There is an interval in the letter here. The writer resumes his pen on the following day :—

"I was interrupted yesterday by the arrival of the Marquis de Saint-Lambert. We spent the evening together."

That is enough ; and we have no need of further witnesses. Grimm evidently told Saint-Lambert what he had just heard from Madame d'Epinay ; and Saint-Lambert came posting home as quickly as he could ; and so the curtain rose on a fresh act.

CHAPTER XXIII

The philosophers laugh at Jean Jacques — Madame d'Epinay reproaches him — Saint Lambert is stiff with him — Madame d'Houdetot seeks to get rid of him — Her manner changes — Jean Jacques writes to Saint Lambert to complain of Madame d'Houdetot's coldness — The wrath of Saint Lambert — Madame d'Houdetot realises that she must drop Jean-Jacques altogether — He sends her the *Lettres à Sophie*, but fails to move her — The curtain falls on the comedy — Madame d'Houdetot and Saint-Lambert remain lovers until the end.

JEAN-JACQUES' first intimation that all was not well with his love affair came from the laughter of his friends. Diderot who, he says, "bothered" him by his too frequent visits, first laughed himself and then set the whole Holbachian coterie laughing. Deleyre chaffed him, writing to inquire when "the hermit" was likely to have finished his round of visits: "I hear he has taken to wandering from country house to country house, paying his addresses to all the fairies in the neighbourhood. How I should laugh to see him fall a victim to their charms!"

The chaff was of a sort that Jean-Jacques was too sensitive to like. It did not please the passionate lover to be greeted with such variants on the theme: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" and he was so greeted not only by Deleyre but also by d'Holbach himself when they met at Madame d'Epinay's dinner

table. The Baron winked at him, and nudged him, and dug him in the ribs, giving him to understand, without mentioning names, that he was a sad, sly dog, while Madame d'Epinay looked on and "held her sides with laughter."

That, truly, following upon the scene in the shrubbery, was of the nature of an anti-climax; but it was only the beginning of the great anti-climacteric about to run its course. The rest of the story consists of wrangles and bickerings, and explanations and apologies—a maze of misunderstandings, reproaches, and recriminations, through which it would be wearisome to grope our way. The quarrel got mixed up with other quarrels, and nearly every one who knew Jean-Jacques took a hand in it.

There had first, of course, to be an explanation with Madame d'Epinay. Jean-Jacques and she felt equally aggrieved: the one because her hospitality had been abused; the other because his hostess had laughed at him. It nearly came to "a scene in public," after a luncheon party; but that Madame d'Epinay would not allow. Jean-Jacques, she said, must wait till she was at leisure to speak with him privately, or else he must go home. He elected to await her convenience; and when the other guests had gone, she bade him follow her to her boudoir. Alone with her, he threw himself at her feet and shed repentant tears. He had heard, he said, that she herself was passionately in love with Saint-Lambert. It was to help her—or at least to avenge her—that he had made love to Saint-Lambert's mistress. If he had done wrong, he was sorry; he had acted, as he thought, for the best.

It was a lame excuse. It sounds even lamer to the reader who knows the story of the shrubbery than it must have sounded to the lady to whom it was addressed. She, indeed, though she can hardly have believed it, may have found it mollifying. Of course it was a lie—an improvised lie, and not particularly plausible. But it suggested devotion to her interests, and perhaps— So this time Madame d'Épinay scolded and forgave, and promised that she would forget, and that things should go on as before.

Only, of course, things could not go on as before, being out of Madame d'Epinay's control. Saint-Lambert was angry, and Madame d'Houdetot was frightened. Those were the leading facts that now governed the situation.

"Saint-Lambert," says Jean-Jacques, "behaved like an honourable and sensible man." He certainly behaved with great moderation, greeting Jean-Jacques "stiffly but amicably" when he met him at dinner, and giving him to understand by his manner that he retained his rival's friendship though he had forfeited a portion of his esteem. That, at all events, is how Jean Jacques puts it, though one suspects that he interpreted Saint Lambert's manner wrongly. The soldier, after all, was only just home from the wars. He knew something of what had been happening in his absence but not everything. Report might have exaggerated the facts; he had only gossip to go upon. He was no love-sick boy, blinded by passion, but a man of forty and a man of the world; and he knew that an exhibition of temper would put the laugh on Jean-Jacques' side. To him, therefore, he was coldly polite while pursuing his

inquiries. The temper only flashed out when he was alone with Madame d'Houdetot and asked her what was the meaning of all this nonsense.

And Madame d'Houdetot, as has been said, was frightened. She had meant no harm. She had only called Jean-Jacques in to amuse her while Saint-Lambert was away, and had never dreamt for a moment of dismissing Saint-Lambert for his sake. Her one wish now was to get rid of the new lover and make her peace with the old one; and that was not so easy as she had expected. Saint-Lambert, knowing much and suspecting more, was in the mood to jilt her. She appealed for help to Madame d'Epinay:—

"Here is the Countess" (says Madame d'Epinay) "writing me letter after letter. I have had three letters from her since yesterday, begging and imploring me to write to the Marquis and persuade him, if I can, that she adores him. She overwhelms me with details which seem to indicate pretty clearly that he would be glad to get rid of her. I gave her the answer she deserved, and I have no intention whatever of mixing myself up in the squabble."

So Madame d'Houdetot was left to extricate herself from her embarrassments as best she could. It was in vain that she spent an evening with her sister-in-law, with "swollen eyes, a bad headache, and unceasing lamentations on the injustice of mankind." No one could drop Jean-Jacques for her; she must give him his dismissal herself.

She did it in the way in which such things are done by women of the world, tactfully avoiding

violent scenes but merely "changing her manner." Jean-Jacques called upon her one day, and found her absent-minded, melancholy, and embarrassed. There had been trouble, she said. Saint-Lambert "had been told, and told wrong." He wished to do her justice, but he was angry—more angry than he allowed the world to see. Her "peace of mind" was in peril. Luckily, she had made no secret of her meetings with Jean-Jacques; her letters had been full of him. Still, gossip had done them a bad turn. Things wore a compromising aspect. They must really be more careful for the future.

That was the first cold douche. Jean-Jacques tried not to be too depressed by it. Saint-Lambert would be going away again soon; his own opportunity would then recur. So he may have argued; but if he did, he was mistaken, for we read:—

"When Saint-Lambert had taken his departure, I found Madame d'Houdetot quite different from what she had been. I was surprised, though I might have expected it. I was more hurt than I ought to have been. . . . When I tried to speak to her, I found her absent-minded and embarrassed. It was evident that she had ceased to find pleasure in my society, and I saw clearly that something had happened which she did not care to tell me."

Nothing, in fact, had happened except that she had made up her mind to drop him; but he was not very easy to drop. Just as, when friendship had been accorded, he had tried to transform it into love, so now, love being out of the question, he insisted

upon the rights of friendship; and the manifestations of his tenacity were strange. He wrote to Saint-Lambert to complain of Madame d'Houdetot's treatment of him:—

"A change has come over everything except my heart. Since your departure her reception of me has been chilly. She hardly speaks to me even about you; she invents a hundred pretexts for avoiding me. She could not behave otherwise if she wanted to get rid of me altogether. At least I imagine so, for no one has ever tried to get rid of me before. I do not understand what it all means. If I have done anything to deserve such treatment, tell me so, and I accept my dismissal. If it is merely levity, then tell me that too, and I will withdraw to-day to be consoled to-morrow. As it is, having responded to the advances that were made to me, and having enjoyed the charm of a society that has come to be necessary to me, I think I have acquired certain rights and become entitled to some consideration; and, when I call you to account for the conduct of the friend whom I owe to you, I feel that I am only inviting you to discharge your duty to humanity!"

A letter truly of matchless impudence when one remembers that shrubbery scene! It was written apparently at the instigation of Diderot, but it was not the letter which Diderot had intended to be written. The story may be read in the Memoirs of Marmontel.

Jean-Jacques, it seems, told Diderot his troubles,

and asked for his advice. Diderot's counsel was that he should send Saint-Lambert a letter of confession and apology. Saint Lambert, he said, was a just man, who esteemed his character and would forgive him for a moment of weakness in the face of an overwhelming temptation. "You have put new life into me," said Jean-Jacques. "You have reconciled me to myself. I will write this very evening"; and he wrote in such a tone as we have seen. The letter was subsequently the subject of conversation between Diderot and the recipient of it. It was, said Saint-Lambert, "a tissue of rascality and impudence." It was "a masterpiece of deceit, intended to throw on Madame d'Houdetot's shoulders all the blame of which he wishes to clear himself." It was, in short, a letter in reply to which a stick ought to have been laid about the writer's back.

Nor was it, we may be sure, from motives either of general benevolence or of particular respect for Jean-Jacques' character that Saint-Lambert refrained from calling upon him, bringing his stick with him. His reflection was rather that such a course would make the welkin ring, and that the less the welkin rang the better. There were the feelings of M. as well as of Madame d'Houdetot to be considered. He was a very accommodating and complaisant husband, but he did stipulate that appearances should be respected. For his sake, therefore, the open scandal of assault and battery had to be avoided; and Jean-Jacques' letter to Saint-Lambert was answered by Madame d'Houdetot.

She had reason, she wrote, to complain of his indiscretion and of that of his friends. She would

faithfully have kept the secret of his unfortunate and unreciprocated passion; but, through his own indiscretion, the rumour of it had reached her lover's ears. He was annoyed; he had been temporarily estranged from her. They were reconciled now, but she could take no further risks. Since people had begun to talk, it would never do for her to grant him any further private interviews. As for Saint-Lambert's opinion of him, he need not distress himself about that. Saint-Lambert had, indeed, for a moment, doubted his virtue, but now he only pitied him; and for the rest:—

"There is no further need of confidences or explanations on the subject; you have only to forget both your passion and the annoyance which it has caused me. I only ask you to keep quiet, seeing that I have recovered my peace of mind, that my innocence is recognised and does not need to be defended by you, and that we neither think nor shall allow any one to speak evil of you."

That must have brought the end very near; but even so Jean-Jacques was not quite suppressed. He wrote again to Saint-Lambert. "No, no, Saint-Lambert," he protested; "the breast of Jean-Jacques Rousseau never harboured the heart of a traitor." He also tried again to move Madame d'Houdetot. If he thought that it would move her, he declared, he would throw himself on the ground to be trampled on by her horses and crushed beneath the wheels of her coach, in the hope at least of compelling her to lament his death. But the answer to that was in terms of icy politeness:—

"I shall certainly be pleased to see you i
the occasion should present itself, and I shall
be interested in your welfare and preserve my r
for your good qualities."

That must have been still more galling; h
galled jade could still do more than wince. He
a number of letters, which were not really lette
literary compositions, called them *Lettres à S*
and sent them to Madame d'Houdetot. He
copies of them, so that they might not be lost
world; and, if they are judged to be of any va
the world, then it is well that he did so. For h
no answer to them; and when, at a later da
asked Madame d'Houdetot what she had done
them, she replied that she had burnt them. I
not believe her. "No, no," he writes; "no on
burns such letters as those were." But that,
theless, had been their fate. One of the letters, i
Madame d'Houdetot, not having the heart to b
because of its eloquent and lofty sentiments
handed to Saint-Lambert; but he had no
scruples. When questioned about it, he tol
inquirer that he had thrown it into the fire, a
other that he fancied he must have left it behin
somewhere—perhaps in his coach—when ch
houses.

So there the love story, in so far as it eve
a love story, ends. Jean-Jacques was, indeed, i
to meet Saint-Lambert and Madame d'Houde
dinner; but that was only a demonstration int
to throw dust in the eyes of scandal-mongers an
suade them that they had made much ado about no

La Comtesse d'Houdetot

Elève de Greuze, gravé par Ingouf l'aîné

He also received a few more letters from them: but the tone of these was cold and discouraging. Saint-Lambert declined to accept a copy of one of his books on the ground that it contained an attack on Diderot, and ended by saying: "Our principles differ too widely for us ever to get on well together. You had better forget my existence." He also forwarded Jean-Jacques a small sum of money—two louis—due to him for copying done on Madame d'Houdetot's behalf. She, finally, wrote, acknowledging his politeness in sending her a presentation copy of *La nouvelle Héloïse*; but the "dear citizen" and "dear friend" of former times is, in this letter, addressed in the third person.

With that the curtain falls for the last time upon the interlude; and the end, according to the conventions of comedy, is a happy one. The interloper, that is to say, is made ridiculous, and manœuvred rather than thrust out into the cold. The true lovers, temporarily estranged, are reconciled and left embracing.

They were always to be lovers, as Madame d'Houdetot, even in the hour of her weakness, had vowed that they always would be. No other cloud was to arise and mar the serenity of their happiness. She lived until 1813, her husband until 1806, Saint-Lambert until 1803: and the *ménage* continued to be a *ménage-à-trois* as long as the three of them were alive. Appearances were always kept up, though everybody knew what was behind them; and the tolerance of the husband and the fidelity of the lover were equally wonders of the world.

Characteristic anecdotes of this autumn period of

their lives abound. Saint Lambert, we read, at the age of eighty five, rose and quitted his mistress's dinner table because she had permitted a man young enough to be her grandson to pay her a homage in verse his exclusive privilege, though he was too old to avail himself of it any longer. There were people, we read, who mistook the lover for the husband, basing their error upon the fact that he grumbled more. And Chateaubriand tells us, in the *Mémoires d'Outre-tombe*, that after her lover's death, Madame d'Houdetot never went to bed without first tapping three times on the floor with her slipper, and saying: "Saint-Lambert, good-night"! Morality itself is disarmed in the presence of such false truth and such unfaithful faith as that!

All this, however, is a digression, though hardly a digression to be avoided. We have to return to Jean-Jacques, the passionate pilgrim now definitely left to pursue his pilgrimage alone.

CHAPTER XXIV

Madame d'Epinay's visit to Geneva—Proposal that Jean-Jacques shall accompany her—His refusal to do so—His consequent quarrels with Grimm, Diderot, and Madame d'Epinay herself—Angry correspondence—Madame d'Epinay requests Jean-Jacques to leave the Hermitage—He does so and moves into a cottage at Mont-Louis, near Montmorency.

JEAN-JACQUES' dismissal by Madame d'Houdetot synchronised with his quarrels with Grimm, Diderot, and Madame d'Epinay.

The three quarrels are intertwined in a tangle that is probably inextricable, and certainly is not worth the trouble of unravelling. Each of the four parties to the disputes has written an account of them; but they all write as special pleaders seeking to justify themselves. Some of them have tampered with documents in order to make out a better case; not one of them is worthy of credence. Happily, however, the details matter very little; and there is no great mystery about anybody's motive.

Jean-Jacques had made a fool of himself, and was consequently open to attack. Diderot was too fond of offering advice before it was asked for, and Jean-Jacques was sensitive on such matters. Madame d'Epinay's feelings had been hurt both by Jean-Jacques' indiscretions and by his neglect of her. Grimm, as Saint-Lambert's friend and Madame

d'Épinay's lover, was disposed to take their view of the case. Thérèse was jealous of fine ladies, ready to believe and to repeat calumnious reports concerning them. The Mother Le Vasseur, a mischief making crone, received, for some undiscoverable reason, a secret allowance from Grimm, and was in the habit of borrowing or begging small sums of money—a louis at a time—from Madame d'Épinay. Given these factors, a quarrel about something or other was more than likely to occur. Given the further fact that Jean-Jacques' ailment made him irritable, the quarrel, when it came, was more than likely to be acute.

There were many minor quarrels; but the main quarrel broke out when Madame d'Épinay decided to go to Geneva and place herself under Dr. Tronchin, and Jean-Jacques refused to accompany her. Did she really want him to go? If so, why? And if not, why did she ask him to go, or, at least, allow him to be asked, and even pressed, to go by her friends on her behalf?

Thérèse said it was the sort of thing Thérèse would say—that Madame d'Épinay wanted to hide her condition from the world, and be delivered secretly of a child of which Grimm would be the father. Perhaps the Mother Le Vasseur invented the story—it was the sort of story that the Mother Le Vasseur would invent. Jean-Jacques appears to have believed it, and repeated it—we shall do him no injustice in saying that it was the sort of story that Jean-Jacques, in his aggrieved and irritable condition, would have been disposed to believe and repeat. There is the further suggestion that Madame d'Épinay and

m were conspiring to attribute the paternity of xpected child to Jean-Jacques.

ll that is nonsense on the face of it. If secrecy Madame d'Épinay's object, she would hardly repaired to Geneva in the hope of escaping rvation, though Thérèse and the Mother Le eur may have been sufficiently ignorant to think The town was full of people who knew her nts of Tronchin's, and visitors to Voltaire. She not on such terms with Jean-Jacques that she likely to want to fabricate evidence of closer acy; and she had no objection to being seen in eva with Grimm, who, in fact, afterwards stayed her there for several months. Moreover, there evidence that she was, just then, in a condition g for concealment. Thérèse's story must be issed as a jealous woman's invention, and ner explanation must be sought.

he plausible explanation is a desire to get Jacques out of the way. He was making himself isance by his pursuit of Madame d'Houdetot. ner sake, for his own sake, for everybody's sake, emed desirable to remove him from the Hermit- His amorous presumptions had caused a scandal, set his friends by the ears; there could be no ance of tranquillity for any one until he was out e way. If he could be manœuvred to Geneva, and good. If he took offence, he could at least anœuvred out of the Hermitage, and that would well.

Diderot, one imagines, was rather an instrument e conspiracy than a party to it. He was a busy- and a creature of impulse, always ready to thrust

his advice down his friends' throats. Nothing was easier for the cool-headed Grimm than to make use of his habit of admonishing Jean Jacques on his eccentricities. He had only to whisper a suggestion: "Our friend Madame d'Epinay is going to Geneva. She ought not, in her present state of health, to go alone. I, most unfortunately, cannot accompany her. There is no reason why you should do so. But, really, Jean Jacques ought to. He is under obligations to her; and so, don't you think . . . ?" That would have been enough to set the machinery in motion. Diderot would have undertaken to "see to it," and could have been relied upon either to hurry to the Hermitage or, at least, to write a strongly worded letter to the Hermit.

As it was, Diderot wrote.

He had heard, he said, that Madame d'Epinay was going to Geneva; he had not heard that Jean-Jacques was going with her. That was unkind. In a strange country—strange to her, but familiar to him—he could render her many valuable services. What an opportunity for him to display his gratitude and discharge his obligations! His motives might be misinterpreted if he did not seize it. Was the state of his health the difficulty? Surely he was making too much fuss about his health! "For my own part, I confess that, if I could not bear the journey in a post chaise, I would take my stick and follow her on foot."

It was a silly letter; it was even a snobbish and ill-conditioned letter. Diderot was meddling with matters which were no concern of his, in the interest of a grand lady who had no claim on him except her

grandeur. If he had stopped to think, he would have seen that duty requires no man to forsake his mistress in order to dance attendance on a wealthy patroness who can easily provide herself with another escort. But Diderot never stopped to think except when deep philosophical questions were at issue; in the practical matters of life he acted on impulse. He acted now on the impulse given him by Grimm, who knew exactly what he wanted.

Grimm wanted Jean-Jacques to lose his temper; and Jean-Jacques lost it.

He had, for once in his life, a good case. It was easy for him to reply to Diderot with dignity, and he did so :—

"My dear friend" (he wrote), "you cannot possibly know the extent or the force of my obligations to Madame d'Epinay; or whether she really needs or desires my company on her journey; or whether I am in a position to go with her; or what reasons I may have for not doing so. I do not refuse to discuss these matters with you; but, in the meantime, I will beg you to observe that for you to decide for me so positively what I ought to do without first acquainting yourself with the facts is, my dear philosopher, an exceedingly silly proceeding."

Jean-Jacques, it must be allowed, was neither unwise nor undignified on paper. His dignity would have been quite unassailable if only he had waited for the conspirators to show their hands. Instead of doing that, he rushed off to La Chevrette, read the two letters to Grimm and Madame d'Epinay, and

added "a few speeches in support of" his rejoinder. He tells us that they were dumbfoundered, and quailed before his indignant gaze. They, on the contrary, say that he flew into such a passion that he tore Diderot's letter to pieces with his teeth. That cannot be true; for the letter still exists and it is not torn. No doubt, however, the interview was sufficiently stormy without this particular demonstration. It certainly left Jean-Jacques under the impression that he must justify himself to Grimm and Madame d'Epinay for not acting on Diderot's suggestion.

He did so at great length. Several letters passed upon the subject; the gist of Jean-Jacques' representations being as follows:

In the first place, he wrote to Grimm, his obligations to Madame d'Epinay had been exaggerated. It was true that she had provided him with a house to live in; but he had only lived in it because she had pressed him to do so, and he had, in return, given her the pleasure of his society. Her patronage had, on the whole, been more nuisance than advantage. She had interrupted his work; and, as a poor man, he had never felt at his ease in a rich woman's house. He had been "hampered by subjection," having no valet of his own to wait upon him, and the rich dishes served at her table had given him indigestion. Really, all things considered, it was she who was under an obligation to him.

In the second place, if he did accompany her to Geneva, he would be of no possible use to her. She would have her son's tutor, her maid, and half a dozen lackeys in attendance; and Tronchin would give her

all the social introductions that she needed. The state of his own health, about which Diderot had spoken so casually, was really serious. His constitutional infirmity would be very embarrassing if he were alone in a post chaise with a lady. Moreover, if his health allowed the journey, his poverty would forbid it. He could not dress well enough even to pass for Madame d'Epinay's confidential servant; and he had not money enough to pay the fare. If he travelled with Madame d'Epinay, therefore, he would have to travel at her expense; and to do that would be to submit to humiliation, and place himself on the level of a salaried servant.

He was quite willing to leave the Hermitage, if that was the price he was expected to pay for the privilege of remaining in it; but he did not wish to leave it in circumstances which would convey the impression that he and Madame d'Epinay had quarrelled.

The arguments, no doubt, were sound; but they were uncalled for. The matter under discussion was no more Grimm's business than it was Diderot's. It should have been discussed with Madame d'Epinay herself or not at all. There was, indeed, no necessity for discussing it since Madame d'Epinay had not broached it. Above all, it was an absurd letter for Jean-Jacques to write to a man who was sure to show it to Madame d'Epinay. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse.* So she would think when she read the excuses with Grimm at her elbow to prompt her. Here, Grimm would say, was a man to whom she had been kind, making light of her kindness—saying that she forced her society upon him, that it was a nuisance to have to call on her, and

that her dinners were indigestible. She was already disposed to take offence because she had seen herself neglected for Madame d'Houdetot, and now she took it.

It would be superfluous to quote all the other letters that passed. There was more misunderstanding than there need have been if the reproaches, recriminations, and explanations had been direct. Jean Jacques did not know what was passing in Madame d'Epinay's mind, and she did not know what was passing in his. Plain talk between the principals would have cleared the air, whether for good or evil; but Jean-Jacques could never talk plainly except when in a passion. A diffident, hypersensitive, false delicacy held him back. He was like the gentlemanly valet whose master told him that no gentleman was ever quite so gentlemanly as all that. He proceeded by circuitous routes, and sounded Madame d'Epinay's friends as to her feelings, so as to avoid embarrassing interviews, instead of taking the plain straightforward course. That, as her friends were acquiring a contempt for him, was fatal.

He did not want to take offence where none was intended; he did not know whether Madame d'Epinay had, or had not, meant to give him a hint to go; he feared to hurt her feelings by a sullen and precipitate retirement. So he consulted Grimm, and Grimm told him not to hurry. But while he was hesitating, Madame d'Epinay was wondering to see him so tenacious and obtuse. It came, in the end, as it was bound to come, to acrimonious correspondence. Jean-Jacques, after having complained to Grimm of Madame d'Epinay, complained to Madame d'Epinay of Grimm—an absurd course, in view of

their relations, however well-founded the complaints. He also returned Madame d'Épinay one of her own letters, with the comment: "This cannot have been meant for me." And yet, having done this, he stayed on at the Hermitage.

In doing that, of course, he let his dignity fail him, just as he had previously let his delicacy play him false. There may or may not have been, as Mrs. Frederika Macdonald says that there was, a conspiracy to turn him out of his comfortable home into the cold world in the dead of winter. Admitting the conspiracy, one cannot admire his resistance of it; his ultimate attitude, as reported by himself, is such as to alienate all sympathy. Let the letters speak for themselves.

Madame d'Epinay to Jean-Jacques:—

"Geneva, *November* 12, 1757.

"I have only just received your letter of the 29th. It is hard for me to believe that it came from you, and that it was meant for me. It is not the letter of a man who, on the eve of his departure, swore that his life would not be long enough to make amends for his affronts to me. This is a novel way of making amends, and I have no answer to give you. I pity you. If you wrote in cold blood, then your conduct fills me with fears on your behalf, for I do not understand it at all. It is not a natural thing that a man should spend his life in suspecting and insulting his friends. . . . I can say nothing else except that you are abusing the patience with which my friendship for you has up to the present inspired me."

Jean-Jacques to Madame d'Epinay :—

"The Hermitage, *November* 23, 17

"Madam, friendship is extinct between us I can respect its rights after it has ceased to exist I wanted to leave the Hermitage, and I felt t ought to do so. But people tell me that I had l stay there until the spring; and so, as that is my friends wish, I propose to remain until the s if you agree to my doing so."

Madame d'Epinay to Jean-Jacques :—

"Geneva, *December* 1, 17

"Having shown you for several years possible mark of friendship and interest, I can do no more than pity you. You are very unfortu I hope your conscience is as easy as mine. may be necessary to the tranquillity of your l

"Since you wished to leave the Hermitage felt that you ought to do so, I am astonished you allowed your friends to detain you there. not consult my friends about my duties, and I nothing to say to you about yours."

Jean-Jacques to Madame d'Epinay :—

"Montmorency, *December* 17, 17

"The simple and obvious course, madam, is I should evacuate your house when you d approve of my remaining in it. On hearing you that you refused to consent to my spendin rest of the winter in the Hermitage, I left it 15th of December. Fate ordained that I shoul

it, as I entered it, against my inclination. I thank you for the stay you induced me to make there. I would thank you more heartily if I had not paid such a high price for the privilege."

There was some further disputation on the question, Who should pay the gardener's wages? Guest and hostess both claimed the right to make that disbursement. Possibly the man got paid twice over in consequence—in which case he, at least, was in a position to say that good was the final goal of ill. The detail, however, is a small one, and nobody's verdict on the story is likely to be affected by it.

That verdict must be that there was too much humility mixed up with Jean-Jacques' pride, and too much pride mixed up with his humility. He was so sensitively anxious to compel others to respect him that he forgot, at the critical moment, to respect himself. Labouring to prove that he had been under no obligation to Madame d'Epinay while she was his friend, he sought, as his letters show, to place himself under an obligation to her after she had ceased to be so—after he had himself told her, in so many words, that no ties of friendship any longer subsisted between them. Ultimately, therefore, his position was that of a guest who had outworn his welcome, and knew that he had outworn it, but asked, for reasons of convenience, to be allowed to stay a little longer.

That was not dignified. Jean-Jacques awoke from his dreams with a start and realised that it was not dignified. He was prepared, he says, to turn his books, effects, and furniture out into the fields, if he could not find another house in which to store them,

rather than fail to obey the peremptory order of eviction. Happily, however, he found friends who helped him to avoid that disagreeable necessity. M. Mathas, procureur-fiscal of the Prince de Conde, offered to let him a cottage at Mont-Louis, near Montmorency. He closed with the proposal, sent for a horse and cart to transfer his belongings to his new abode, and took possession of it on December 15, 1757.

Thérèse, of course, accompanied him; but the Mother Le Vasseur was sent away, in spite of her daughter's tears, to live with other members of her family. It was more than time. She was an avaricious and mischievous old woman,—a veritable precursor of Madame Cardinal,—and no regrets need follow her as she passes out of this history.

CHAPTER XXV

fter storm — Jean Jacques' reflections on his love affair — settles down to his work The gospel of the simple life The *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles* The case inst the theatre Jean Jacques discovered in his retreat — visit from the Maréchal de Luxembourg.

Montmorency Jean-Jacques found peace after orm. Having failed to stand up against the he felt himself well out of it.

e insists that he had really loved — *aimé r* — Madame d'Houdetot; but there is more one kind of love. Or, at all events, there is han one kind of passion for which the name of s made to serve; and Jean-Jacques' candour s us to analyse his feelings more completely e analysed them himself.

e must not think of him as a man whose ies ineffaceably scarred his heart. We must cture the lost face haunting him by day and surprising him at unexpected hours, forcing between him and his other interests, filling him ne sense that the past had been wasted, and e future did not matter. Nor must we imagine rtured by the thought that another man enjoyed ours that had been denied to him. Madame rens had done her best to educate him out of acity for emotions of that sort; and his

weakness, rather than his strength, saved him from them.

Desire had been inflamed; but desire was not really strong in him. It was too strong, indeed, for his well-being. He gives pathological particulars for which the curious must be referred to his own works. They suggest the frenzies of which, as a rule, one reads only in the technical writings of the alienists. But the passion lacked vigour and virility. It was an excitement artificially stimulated—an unnatural and exhausting spasm, with no real force behind it. It did not last, therefore, but ceased with the cessation of the stimulus, leaving Jean-Jacques tired of the stress and strain of living too intensely.

Nor was it only the stress and strain of passion that had troubled him. There had also been the stress and strain of quarrelling, of manœuvring, of balancing duty against inclination, of maintaining his dignity in compromising situations, of arguing that he was really behaving rather well when people told him that he was behaving very badly—of never knowing exactly where he stood, or what was going on behind his back. While he vowed that he had been wronged, he knew that he had been baffled and beaten; and he did not want to make matters worse by struggling further. He had none, or little, of either the resentment or the gloom of the man who has lost the love which he values above everything else in the world. His tone was rather that of a man whose social ambitions have been disappointed—who is sorry for his mistake, and will not repeat it, but hopes that it may be forgiven and forgotten. It had been much the same when he confessed that his

ration of love had made him "an object of dis-" in the eyes of Madame Dupin. Only he was now, and had been more in earnest, so that it harder for him to recover his equanimity. He ed rest—time to pull himself together, and re-rate, and get back to his work.

Letters and *Confessions* alike show him taking of himself, and gathering up his impressions. s full of grievances against Grimm who has in-ed for his discomfiture, Diderot who has betrayed confidence, and the Holbachians generally who laughed at him. It is also clear that the in-ce of Madame d'Épinay has wounded him more the unkindness of Madame d'Houdetot.

He never accuses Madame d'Houdetot of having d with him, though he could have founded the ge upon fact. At all events, he utters no complaints in retrospect after the breach. His bitter recollection, on looking backwards, relates is wasteful expenditure in tips to her servants. on my word," he writes, "my visits to Madame oudetot at Eaubonne must have cost me at least und-twenty crowns, though I only slept at her e four or five times"; and one feels assured that was indeed extinct when he put that thought on r. He had had the same trouble—and more of it La Chevrette. His largesses there, he says, were nous." But he has more disagreeable things than to say about Madame d'Épinay's hospitality; and oes not wait till he writes his *Confessions* to say . We find him repeating his complaint as to the igestibility" of her dinners in a letter to his old on M. de Francueil, who tells him bluntly in reply,

that that is not the way in which one should speak of people at whose hands one has received kindness.

Jean-Jacques' indignation must, indeed, have been bitter when he laid himself open to that retort; but it was hardly the sort of indignation that could disturb his tranquillity in his new abode. His solitude at the Hermitage had been invaded, first by the social exigencies of his hostess, and then by a whirlwind of miscellaneous emotions. At Mont Louis it rested with himself to say whether he would be alone or not. He had acquaintances in the neighbourhood, with whom he could talk or play chess. He had friends in Paris, not of the Holbachian group—Deleyre, and Duclos, and Madame de Créquy, who was so fond of presenting him with poultry, and some others—whom he could visit when he chose; and he entered, in these conditions, upon the most peaceful and also the most productive period of his career.

He has cut, it is to be feared, but a poor figure in the passionate pilgrimage through which we have traced his steps. We have seen him looking ridiculous, and behaving as a gentleman would not have behaved. It is hard to realise that the man whose passion was an object lesson in morbid pathology, whom Grimm had outwitted and Madame d'Épinay had bullied and Madame Houdetot had snubbed, was on the verge of uttering thoughts that would astonish and delight and shock and shake the world. But so it was.

Jean-Jacques was the ugly duckling of the Holbachian company. Not only did the others treat him like an ugly duckling; he behaved like one. Not

ng been brought up according to the rules, he
er learnt to conform to them. Though he tried
o so, his heart was not in the work. He was
ys making mistakes, not so much unsociable as
ble to attune himself to the society which he
ght, and which, to some extent, sought him. But
subliminal consciousness was always active, even
n he seemed absorbed, or worried, or excited by
, or envy, or jealousy, or the embarrassments of
oor man received on terms of equality by the
If he did not sit down to think, thoughts grew
m. That is the way of genius.

We must not refuse the word genius because we
the logic loose, the premises unwarranted, and the
lusions consequently unwarrantable. Genius is a
ity of the temperament rather than of the intellect.
man of genius is the man who makes himself
d, even when he is wrong, because he is felt to be
t in the main,—because his sophisms, if he be
istical, give expression and shape and substance
a semblance of cohesion to the deep-seated instincts
emotions of inarticulate multitudes. He is gener-
despised by the men of intellect among his
emporaries. They see the fallacies in his argu-
ts, and, very properly, expose them. They ignore
a rule they do not even see—the truths of
h the fallacies are the imperfect adumbration.

So with Jean-Jacques. All the clever people
against him. They admitted that he too was
er, but they considered him wrong-headed.
ed, they had only to take him literally in order
rove that he was wrong-headed. But the root
ne matter was in him, though his meaning had

to be felt rather than deduced. Living in an artificial age, he called for a return to simplicity; and his voice was heard. Many prophets are calling for the same thing to-day, but their voices are not heard. Either the instinct to which they appeal slumbers too deeply to be awakened by any voice; or else they lack the magnetic influence which we call genius. Probably each of the two explanations has its share of truth.

The eighteenth century, at any rate, was easier to preach to than the twentieth. It had fewer distractions, and more time for listening to preachers. The upper classes were bored by their own ceremonious grandeur; the middle classes laboured under vexatious disabilities; the poor were very poor, the victims of the tax gatherer and the *corvée*. To each of them the gospel of simplicity meant something. To the rich it meant new, more natural, more humane emotions; to the bourgeois it meant the demolition of the privileges of the class above them; to the poor it meant—or might be held to mean—the overthrow of the oppressor and the confiscation of his property. It was in accordance with the custom of the time that the gospel should be presented in the form of a system of philosophy; but none of those who heard it gladly cared whether the system was sound or not. Only a few "intellectuals" troubled their heads about that.

The preacher was terribly in earnest, and full of accumulated ideas. All the ideas contained in all his famous books appear to have come to him at once; which means, of course, that all the ideas had long been latent in his mind, and that, now that he had leisure to look for them, he found them there. He

wanted to simplify love and religion and government and education. He wanted, that is to say, to finish his novel, and to write *Emile* and the *Contrat Social*. When once he was launched upon his task there must be no pause in it. He might write a little on music, having a dictionary of music on hand—that would be rest and recreation; but journalism should not tempt him. He was offered a post as reviewer of books for the *Journal des Savants*, but he declined it. He wanted all his time for preaching; and his first sermon, dashed off in three weeks, was his *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles*.

D'Alembert, at Voltaire's suggestion, had written an article on Geneva for the *Encyclopædia*. He had offended the orthodox inhabitants of the city, which John Knox described as "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the Apostles," by saying that their ministers were much too intelligent to believe the Christian doctrines; and he had added that the one thing which they still needed to civilise them completely was a theatre. The first count in the indictment need not concern us, though it aroused furious indignation at Geneva. On the second count Jean-Jacques replied in his famous open letter, maintaining that the effect of the theatre was to corrupt good morals.

It has been proved, over and over again, that he was insincere; in spite of the proofs, it remains practically certain that he was not.

It is true that he was jealous of Voltaire, and that Voltaire had a theatre in his house to which he invited the Genevan citizens, and that an attack upon the drama was by implication an attack on him.

It is true again that he was himself a dramatist and a playgoer, that for years, as he mentions in the letter, he had been to the theatre nearly every night of his life, and that he was engaged, at the very time of the controversy, or very soon afterwards, in a quarrel with the management of the Opera about the royalties due to him for performances of *Le Devin du village*. The former circumstance may have caused him to deliver the assault with greater gusto; the latter indubitably gives a handle to any one who cares to charge him with inconsistency. But he was in earnest none the less; and his thesis, stripped of its verbiage, amounts to this:

The theatre is an institution incompatible with the living of the simple life. In Paris that hardly matters. Nobody lives the simple life in Paris. Paris is already so corrupt that a little additional corruption is neither here nor there. Geneva is nearer to the Golden Age. The drama, introduced into Geneva, would sow its corrupting seed in virgin soil. The people are still simple and unsophisticated. The stage would undermine their simplicity and sophisticate them, seducing them from primitive virtue, inclining the men to gallantry and the women to extravagance and vainglorious display. That—to come round again to the starting-point—is the tendency of the theatre wherever it is established.

It would take too long to examine all the arguments. Many of them are trivial and inconclusive; some of them are absurd. The *obiter dictum* that the Genevans are better occupied in getting drunk, according to their custom, than they would be in listening to the works of Corneille, Racine, and

scarcely calls for serious examination here,
it gave great offence in Geneva at the time.
ggestion that popular dances are a more
recreation for young men and maidens than
ng, and less fraught with temptations to
e, will not commend itself to any one
s troubled to inquire how young men and
comport themselves during and after such
ns. All that, however, is mere embroidery
central theme. In the main Jean-Jacques
ut a case, though he falls short of proving all
sets out to prove.

case is absolutely good against the vain actors
ge-struck parsons who think that they have
ncorporate themselves into a Guild in order
the theatre the hand-maiden of the Church.
business of the Church to be in advance of
nt morality of the age. It is the business—
ed the necessity—of the stage to reflect it.
sons for which people stay away from church
us; but the fact that the preacher's precepts
higher plane than their own practices is not
hem. They do, on the contrary, stay away
theatre because, among other reasons, the
ne of the performances is not such as they
approve. And that settles it. The people
r be reformed by a piper who merely pipes to
tune which they have called. Nor will it,
other hand, be reformed by a comedian
ting in a vacuum.

is a sound argument; but it carries with it a
which Jean-Jacques does not seem to see.
same reasons for which the theatre cannot be

a power for good, it cannot be a power for evil. The comedian, unless he wishes to bombinate in a vacuum —which is not the goal of the ordinary comedian's desire—can no more afford to be more immoral than he can afford to be more moral than his audience. A licentious play does not create, but implies and requires, an audience with licentious interests. It is a symptom, not a cause, of the diseased condition of the social organism. One can imagine cases in which the licence of the stage might corrupt an individual; one cannot picture it corrupting a community. The community as a whole always gets the sort of theatre that it deserves. Attempts to corrupt it, and to elevate it, are met in the same way. The adventurers are first shouted down, and then are frozen out.

The rejoinder, however, after all, is only an answer to the letter of the pleadings. The spirit remains unaffected by them. The simple life—the return to nature—that is the real underlying point of the discourse. We may think, if we like, that Jean-Jacques turned to the simple life chiefly for personal reasons: because he was ill and society was irksome, because he was poor and society was expensive, because he could not hold his own in society, because Thérèse was unpresentable, because he had been disappointed in love, because he had been laughed at. It may have been so, but it really does not matter. Most of us, when we take our new departures, are influenced by more motives than we avow.

The motive which Jean Jacques admitted to himself was "virtue." He tells us, more than once, that, at such-and-such a point in his career, he "became virtuous." He says so for the first time just before

his last child to the Foundling Hospital; he again just before the scene in the shrubbery dame d'Houdetot. It was apparently his view or virtuous and to live in the country are propositions. They are not so in general, were not so in this particular instance; but nother of the things that do not matter very l he essential is that Jean Jacques had faith wn virtue and "felt good." The faith was r to him. Without it he could not have s he did. Writing as he did, he convinces ndeed that the faith was justified, but that he rmly. The world was wicked; he had with om it; therefore he was good. That was the syllogism.

as it happened, the world was yet again to him in his retreat.

Maréchal de Luxembourg had a country t far away from his cottage. He heard that s a philosopher in the neighbourhood, and he us with that intellectual curiosity which is the he eighteenth century in France. He was ne greatest men in the kingdom, a personal the King; but he resembled the rest of the who nearly all took a kindly, condescending in the revolutionary thinkers whose bold ons, translated into bolder practice, were to break that order up. He guessed no n the others—no more, one may almost add, majority of the thinkers themselves—that the ons would come to have a political as well as ophical significance. But he thought Jean- would be an interesting man to meet; so he

sent a servant to say, with his compliments and those of the Maréchale, that they would be glad to see the philosopher at dinner whenever he cared to come.

Jean-Jacques thanked him for the invitation, but did not avail himself of it, and did not even call at the château to acknowledge the compliment. He reproaches himself for the omission as a breach of the etiquette of the time and country. But for that, one would have said that he was quite right, as a stickler for equality, to wait to be called upon instead of accepting a general invitation. Be that as it may, the Maréchal did in the end come to call on him "with a retinue of five or six persons." Jean-Jacques received the party, "in the midst of dirty plates and broken pots and pans," in a room with a floor so fragile that it nearly broke beneath their weight. The visitor, as indeed anyone but Jean Jacques would have expected, was as courteous, easy, and unembarrassed as if he had been received in a palace; and that visit, of course, had to be returned.

CHAPTER XXVI

Madame de Luxembourg. Her kindness to Jean Jacques. The condescensions of the Maréchal. Illustrious visitors to Jean-Jacques' cottage. Removal to the "Petit Château." Madame Verdelin. The Prince de Conti. Jean Jacques at the château. The Reading of *La nouvelle Héloïse*. Jean Jacques' social blunders. Strained relations with Madame de Luxembourg.

RETURNING the call of the Maréchal de Luxembourg, Jean Jacques re-entered Society, or rather, entered a new society far more fashionable and distinguished than that which he had quitted.

Madame d'Epinay and Madame Dupin were great ladies by comparison with Madame de Warens; but as they were to Madame de Warens, so was Madame de Luxembourg to them. Their world was that of *haute finance* impregnated with Bohemianism; Madame de Luxembourg was an aristocrat without qualification. She could quarrel on equal terms with the Duchesse d'Orléans, with whom she argued, according to d'Argenson, "like a fish-fag," concerning their respective claims to a certain box at the Opera.

Of course, she had a past—every illustrious Frenchwoman of the period had a past. The Maréchal de Luxembourg was her second husband, and had been, quite openly, her lover for many years before her first husband, the Duc de Boufflers, died. Conjugal felicity

was only attained, if at all, in eighteenth-century France, as the result of such processes of selection and elimination. But hers was one of the cases in which the dead past successfully buried its dead. She was fifty-two, and her period of levity was over. She was happy and contented and "serious." She had once had a reputation for beauty, and still had a reputation for wit; and now she "took up" Jean-Jacques.

One always approaches such episodes in Jean-Jacques' career with trepidation, for he never shines in them and they invariably bring out all that is least attractive in his character. He was not a misanthrope, though he gained that reputation later; but he was neurotic and shy, and could never quite forget that he once had been a valet. Other people, recognising his genius, were quite willing to forget it; but he could never, without conscious effort, put it out of his mind. The memory recurred, at awkward moments, like a startling apparition. Hence his fear that M. de Luxembourg's invitation to dinner might mean an invitation to dine in the servants' hall—a fear which assuredly would never have occurred to Voltaire, or d'Alembert, or Diderot. Hence also various other consequences: his naïve surprise at finding himself treated on a footing of equality by Dukes and Duchesses; his overpowering anxiety to please; his uncertainty as to the means of doing so; his readiness to take offence at unintended slights.

Of course, he was subjugated by the charming and easy condescension of his new friends: a Marshal of France who deigned to call upon him in his cottage; a leader of society who insisted that he should always

xt to her at dinner, and permitted him to read
oks aloud to her. The narrative, though written
fterwards, faithfully reflects the naïveté of the
ssion. "I was very much afraid of Madame de
nbourg," Jean-Jacques begins. "I found her
ing," he continues. "Her methods of flattery
e more delightful because they are so simple.
At our very first interview I gathered that she
me, in spite of my awkward manners and my
speeches. All the women who have been at
know how to make you think that, whether it
or not; but they cannot all, like Madame de
nbourg, persuade you of it so delicately as to
o room for doubt."

Madame de Luxembourg was kind, M. de
nbourg was even kinder. He amazed Jean-
s by meeting him "on a footing of perfect
y" and that though he could boast himself
special friend of the King!" Jean-Jacques'
l emotion bubbles over continually, alike in the
sions and the Correspondence. As a rule, he
to the Chevalier de Lorenzi, whom he met at
uke's house, a wise man avoids the intimate
hip of persons in a higher station than his
but there are exceptions to the rule, and this
of them: "Please God that I may never wish
der ties which form the happiness of my life,
hich become dearer and dearer to me every
To the Duke himself he writes that his house
lightful one to visit, and he proceeds:—

think that, if we are both such men as I like
eve that we are, then we may furnish the world

with a rare and even a unique spectacle: the spectacle of an intercourse of esteem and friendship—the word "friendship" is your own—between two men born in conditions so diverse that it would have seemed impossible for any such relations to subsist between them."

And then there is the story in the *Confessions* of the Maréchal's kindness to Jean-Jacques' friend, Coindet.

Coindet was a clerk in Thelusson's—afterwards Necker's—bank. He used to visit Jean Jacques, partly, it would seem, for the purpose of telling him what people were saying about him in Paris, partly on business connected with the illustration of his books; and he had a tendency to use his acquaintance with the distinguished author as a lever for pushing his own social fortunes. "Come to dinner, and bring your friend with you," said the Maréchal, one day; and Jean-Jacques did so.

"That" (he explains) "was exactly what the cunning rogue was playing for. And so it came about that, thanks to the extraordinary kindness of my friends to me, one of M. Thelusson's clerks—a clerk whom M. Thelusson occasionally invited to dinner when no other guests were to be present—found himself all of a sudden admitted to the table of a Marshal of France, seated among Princes and Duchesses, and all the most distinguished personages of the Court."

Nor was that all. When Coindet rose to go,

Luxembourg proposed to walk a little way
him. In relating that act of condescension,
acques grows dithyrambic:

The poor fellow was quite taken aback; his
was in a whirl. As for myself, my heart was
ched that I could not speak a word. I walked
l them, weeping like a child, longing to pro-
myself and kiss the ground on which this good
hal had trodden."

similar story is of the day on which a number
kes and Duchesses came to call on Jean Jacques
ont-Louis. They "had not disdained to walk
ery steep hill" in order to give themselves the
re of seeing him:—

owed all these visits" (he says) "to the favour
and Madame de Luxembourg. I felt that it
, and my heart paid them all the homage that
ue. It was in one of these melting moods that
raced M. de Luxembourg, and said: 'Ah, M.
réchal, I hated the aristocracy before I knew
Now I hate them more than ever, since you
shown me how easy it would be for them to
themselves beloved.'"

nd yet, in spite of these flattering attentions,
acques insists that he was not proud. He calls
ends to witness that the splendour never for a
nt dazzled him—that the vapour of the incense
mounted to his head—that he remained simple
bearing and affable towards his humbler

neighbours. He cannot see that there was no earthly reason why he should not have continued to be affable to them. He demands credit for his affability; he demands it at the top of his voice; and adds an anecdote to prove that he deserves it:—

"Thérèse had made friends with the daughter of a mason of the neighbourhood named Pilleu. I made friends with the girl's father; and often, after I had dined in the morning at the château, not without embarrassment, to please Madame la Maréchale, I returned in the evening with haste and eagerness to sup with the worthy Pilleu and his family, sometimes in his house, and sometimes in mine."

That is Jean-Jacques as he likes to see and show himself: the social lion, flattered, and worthy of flattery, but incapable of being spoiled by it—preserving his simple dignity in the perfumed chambers of the great—preferring his cottage and his Thérèse, but frequenting mansions and duchesses as a graceful concession to the claims of friendship. Let us honour the ideal while admitting that he failed to realise it. For he certainly fell away from it—fell further away from it than he knew—when he "made a dictionary" of the French language as spoken by Thérèse "for the amusement of Madame de Luxembourg"; and there were other lapses too, of which we shall presently find him guilty.

His friends, at any rate, did nothing to seduce him from the path which he had marked out for himself as honourable and virtuous. In the annals of literary patronage we find no more graceful, tactful,

minded patron than M. de Luxembourg. He
t puffed up with pride because he was a Duke
Marshal of France. He accepted his titles and
s as naturally as he accepted the colour of
ir, never thinking of them except when they
l obligations, or enabled him to help a friend.
s always glad to render solid services, but he
forced his favours. His gifts were innocent
nostentatious—game that he had shot, a snuff
bellished with his portrait. When he proposed
d his new friend a house, he gave the most
reasons. The floor of the cottage at Mont-
was in such a state! Really, it must be
l. And there was an unoccupied pavilion—the
château"—in the Park. If Jean-Jacques would
ling to take up his quarters there while the
were being executed, he would be very
table.

n-Jacques did move to the "petit château,"
und himself very comfortable there. The
ws looked out on two artificial lakes; the view
e that from the Borromean islands on Lake
ore:—

With what eagerness" (he exclaims) "I ran
ery morning, at sunrise, to breathe the fragrant
the pillared colonnade! What excellent
I drank there, *tête-à-tête* with my Thérèse!
t and the dog never failed to keep us company.
society would have sufficed me for my life-
nd I should never have known a moment of
. I lived there as innocently and happily as
arthly paradise."

The visitors who came to him in his earthly paradise did not trouble its peace, whether they were his own friends or those of M. de Luxembourg. The former lived too far away, and the latter were too discreet, to come too often. Not all the philosophers, we must remember, were involved in the Holbachian quarrel. D'Alembert had taken no offence at the *Lettre sur les spectacles*, though he had written a witty reply to it; he and Jean-Jacques were jointly concerned in a successful attempt to secure the release of Abbé Morellet[1] from the Bastille, where he had been confined as a punishment for a sarcasm reflecting on a great lady. Duclos[2] and Deleyre continued to be cordial. Deleyre, indeed, was idolater enough to refuse to take offence even when Jean-Jacques reflected on the virtue of the lady whom he was about to marry; and his letters abound in proposals to spend a week-end at Montmorency.

The friendship with Madame Verdelin also belongs to the same period. She was not in the Luxembourg set; she was not grand enough. But she was a rich woman, with a country seat in the neighbourhood; and she was an unhappy wife, and also an unhappy mistress. Jean-Jacques' friend, M. de Margency, had first seduced her virtue and then discovered religious principles which forbade him to continue the intrigue. There was no mystery about

[1] Morellet was an encyclopædist, and, in political economy, a disciple of Turgot. Not a great original thinker, he did useful work in popularising the ideas of the eighteenth century philosophers.

[2] Perpetual Secretary of the Academy, and also Historiographer of France.

re never was any mystery about these matters
eighteenth century; and she came to Jean-
s for consolation, and seems even—the proof
more in her letters than in his *Confessions*—to
thrown herself at his head. He tells us that
xchanged confidences and "wept together";
e correspondence shows that she was allowed—
ed that she apologised for doing so—to give
esents—a few pots of flowers and jars of honey
that he tried to push her back into M. de
ney's arms. In vain; but that is extraneous
story.

her visitors—those who came from the château
uded the Duc de Villeroy, the Prince de Tingry,
arquis d'Armentières, the Comtesse de Boufflers,
uchesse de Montmorency, the Comtesse de
inois, and—greatest of all—the Prince de Conti,
hom Jean-Jacques played chess. He beat him,
ls us, in spite of the winks and hints of
s-in-waiting; "and finally," he says, "I
ted to him in respectful but serious tones:
eigneur, I have too much esteem for your
highness not to be the winner.'" But perhaps
as *esprit d'escalier*.

r the rest, Jean-Jacques was constantly at the
u. Every consideration was shown to him;
allowance was made for his shyness. He was
ated as a "lion" to be sent for only when there
ompany to be entertained. He was welcome
there was company; but his taste for solitude
espected. He could call when he liked, and
away when he preferred. His place at the
table was next to his hostess. He proposed,

as he was a poor talker, to read his writings aloud to her instead of making conversation; and she accepted the offer with enthusiasm. He read *La nouvelle Héloïse* to her and the Maréchal while she lay in bed in the morning:—

"The success of this experiment surpassed my expectations. Madame de Luxembourg became infatuated with Julie and the author. She spoke of no one but me; she thought of no one but me. She paid me compliments from morning till night, and embraced me ten times a day. . . . I became really attached to her in consequence of the attachment to me of which she gave evidence. My only fear, in observing this attachment, and in realising how little charm there was in my conversation to sustain it, was that the infatuation might presently change into disgust."

"Unfortunately," he adds, "my fear was only too well founded"; and the sentence reveals the neurotic—reveals, that is to say, the true Jean-Jacques.

For there is not a word of truth in it; or at any rate it is an exaggeration so exaggerated that it bears no resemblance to the truth. The relation of the alleged estrangement in the *Confessions* is absolutely unintelligible. However carefully one reads it, one cannot make head or tail of it; and the Correspondence is hardly more helpful. Jean-Jacques' letters show him nursing a grievance which it is hard to seize. Madame de Luxembourg's letters show her absolutely unable to comprehend on what grounds her correspondent considers himself aggrieved, but

d nevertheless to pour all the available oil
he agitated waters. Probably, however, the
the situation is to be found in the following
: in the *Confessions* : —

inding myself fêted and fussed over by persons
high distinction, I passed all the bounds of
ty, and conceived for them a friendship which
permissible between equals. My manner with
as exceedingly familiar, whereas they, on their
ver relaxed the politeness to which they had
med me. And yet I never felt quite at my
th Madame la Maréchale."

ensibly this admission has no bearing on the
f the estrangement. It slips out, as it were,
tently. But, in fact, it probably explains all
ere is to be explained. Jean-Jacques did not
ow to behave like a duke; the Duke and the
s did not know how to behave like Swiss
rians—people who slap you on the back and
u in the ribs on insufficient grounds. Their
of equality was that he should try to behave
m; while he was hurt because they did not
like him.

t was one source of trouble. Another was
an-Jacques did not always get on very well
e people whom he met at the château. Some
were malicious enough to set traps for him
ersation, inveigle him into saying things that
have been better left unsaid, compel him to
nd then laugh at him for blushing. He did
to his popularity by telling the Comtesse de
s that a story which she had written, and

shown to him, was plagiarised from an English original; or by saying, with the best intentions in the world, that a certain portrait of Madame de Luxembourg was an admirable likeness, when she herself regarded it as a daub which did her gross injustice. Much merriment was made at his expense when he changed the name of his dog from Duke to Turk, as a token of respect to M. de Luxembourg. This was brought up against him at the supper table by the young Marquis de Villeroy, and he would have liked the ground to open and swallow him with his shame. He had placed himself, in short, in the position of a courtier without possessing any of a courtier's gifts. He felt uncomfortable, and, resenting his discomfort, threw the blame on Madame de Luxembourg.

His one tangible complaint against her was that, while she had been delighted to hear him read *La nouvelle Héloïse*, she displayed less interest in *Émile*. Assuredly she was neither the first nor the last woman who has preferred novels to treatises on education; and he must have been very sensitive indeed to feel wounded or irritated about that. Irritated he was, however, about that in particular, and also about things in general; and, if one sets the *Confessions* on one side and follows the Correspondence, one is lost in admiration at the tact and skill and gentleness with which Madame de Luxembourg handled him.

He wrote her many exasperating letters; one extract may serve as an example of their tenor:—

"Is gratitude enough for a heart . . . which is only capable of friendship? Friendship, Madame la

nale! There you have the secret of my un-
ess! It is all very well for you, M. le
al, to use the term, but it is mad of me to
u at your word. You are only amusing your-
ile I am becoming seriously attached to you,
sh regrets will be my only portion when the
s finished. How I hate your titles, and how
you for bearing them! You seem to me quite
of tasting the charms of private life. Why
not live at Clarens? I would gladly go there
t of happiness. But the Hotel de Luxem-
Is that a place where Jean-Jacques should
? Is it there that a friend of equality can
he affections of a sympathetic heart, thinking
make return for the respect shown to him, and
g that he gives as much as he receives? You
d and sympathetic too. I know it; I have
; I regret that I was so long in coming to
it. But your rank, and the style in which
e, make it impossible for any of your im-
s to endure. . . . You will forget me,
. . . . You will have done much to make me
y, and to place yourself beyond the pale of
"

difficulty of dealing with a man who wrote
of that sort does not need to be proved.
e de Luxembourg, as one can see from her
was as perplexed by the eloquent outburst as
l been couched in a foreign language. She
the faintest idea what all the fuss was about.
guage was French; but the sentiments were
a strange democracy, whose scale of values

she could not even begin to understand. But she did understand how to maintain her own dignity without asserting it; and she made allowances, and refused to take offence, and calmed the ruffled susceptibilities of ungainly genius with an adroitness which had been quite beyond Madame d'Epinay.

Her letters—there is a long series of them—are like healing unguents poured upon a wound. Jean-Jacques, she says, must not suppose that Madame de Boufflers has been speaking evil of him behind his back; Madame de Boufflers has done nothing of the kind. Nor must he imagine that the Prince de Conti sent him a present of game with any idea of placing him under an obligation; the gift was quite an ordinary act of friendship. She herself had meant no harm in giving Thérèse a new dress. What an idea that he should threaten no longer to be friends with her for such a reason! He does her an injustice in accusing her of giving him a fowl, a jar of truffles, and an almond cake. Those gifts, if he has indeed received them, must have come from some other admirer. And it is absurd for him to say that he feels less embarrassment in M. de Luxembourg's society than in hers: "At my age, sir, one has outgrown one's sex. There remains to me only a heart which refuses to grow old for you, and which you will always find very sympathetic." As for that unkind contrast between Clarens and the Hotel de Luxembourg:—

"To live at Clarens one would have to be Julie. I know very well that the Hotel de Luxembourg is not the same sort of place, and therefore I refrain from reminding you that it contains a little apartment which

be only too happy to receive you. You know
that is enough. I will not importune you.
y you do not forbid me to desire to see you.
s a request which I should find it very hard
."

great deal more in the same strain; the letters
models of their kind. No lady could have
red a difficult man of genius more tactfully than
e de Luxembourg humoured Jean-Jacques;
r patient efforts were crowned in the end with
. The threatened quarrel was checked as often
premonitory symptoms were observed; the little
s never allowed to widen outward; and we
e presently how well Madame de Luxembourg
d when Jean-Jacques awoke to find himself not
nous, but also the object of political and ecclesi-
persecution.

CHAPTER XXVII

Jean-Jacques at work. The interest of the aristocracy in his writings—*La nouvelle Héloïse*. Secret of its charm. The simple life.—The Arcadia of *Opera Bouffe*. The relation between virtue and the tears of sensibility.

JEAN-JACQUES remained at Montmorency first at Mont-Louis and afterwards in the "petit château"—just four years and a half. He was not quite forty-six when he arrived; he was a little more than fifty when he departed. A careless reading of the autobiography might give the impression that his social successes (and failures) made up the whole of life for him during the period. They cannot, in fact, have occupied, at the most, more than the summer months. Society went regularly into winter quarters in Paris, and Jean-Jacques did not follow it there, except now and then, for a day or two, by invitation. For long stretches of time he was alone, with Thérèse, and the cat, and the dog that had ceased to answer to the name of "Duke."

The letters show that his interests, both social and literary, were various. He wept with Madame de Verdelin over their common disappointment in love. He warded off the gifts showered upon him by Madame de Créquy, who resumed her practice of sending him poultry; and we have a surly letter in which he complains of receiving a consignment of four fowls from her in a single hamper. Very likely

ruffles and the almond cake which he accused
me de Luxembourg of giving him really came
her. The letters of Deleyre and others prove
in spite of his denunciations of the theatre, he
ot ceased to be concerned about the fate of his
lays. Reference has already been made to the
te about the fees due to him for performances
devin du village at the Opera. In that contro-
Duclos assisted him. With the help of Deleyre
ated for productions of the same piece at Vienna
Copenhagen.

ost of his time, however, he must have spent
at his desk or in solitary meditation on the
and political problems which he had promised
lf to resolve. He took an egotistical delight in
g copies of his own writings to give to his friends.
of his quarrels arose over the question of pay-
for this self imposed labour, for which he appears
ve taken money, while protesting that he would
do so. When he was not copying he was com-
g, and the years which he spent at Montmorency
the years in which he achieved immortality. The
done before his sojourn there had only been a
inary fantasia. It had caused him to be talked
; it had made him an object of curiosity. But it
l never, standing alone, have associated his name
a body of doctrine, or produced any durable effect.
hleteering is not literature ; and Jean-Jacques, so
vas little more than a pamphleteer. Now he was
ng books—the three of his books which really
: *La nouvelle Héloïse*, *Émile*, and *Le Contrat*
l. One cannot but pause, before speaking of
, to look at the piquant contrasts in the situation.

Rousseau and the Women he Loved

Nobody realised what he was doing, he did not even realise it himself. Nobody dreamed as yet he did not himself dream either of a French Revolution or of a Romantic Movement. For the world he was merely a philosopher like another more interesting only because more eccentric; and philosophers were the fashion just then in French society, for much the same reasons for which actors have been the fashion in English society at a later date. They were amusing; they contributed to the harmony of dull evenings; it was interesting to wonder what they would be up to next. It was the more interesting because, in the best French circles of the time, nearly every one was an amateur philosopher just as in other circles at other times nearly every one is found to be an amateur politician, or theologian, or actor. Society, therefore, enjoyed nothing better than peeping over the shoulders of a philosopher at work, and Jean Jacques allowed, and encouraged, and even invited them to do so.

There is our picture: the *ancienne noblesse* crowding round Jean-Jacques to admire, to be amused, and even, in a modest way, to criticise—to do everything, in short, except to understand. They laughed at him, and yet they rather liked him. They smiled at his *gaucheries* when he floundered through strange social waters. Some of them teased him, and others humoured him, and helped him *se faire valoir*. They applauded his eloquence, his *douces émotions*, his paradoxes, and his home truths; they were entirely in favour of the simple life, provided that they were not called upon to live it too consistently, and they enjoyed the lashing of their vices, as a "smart set" nearly always does. What they did not perceive

was that the philosopher was knocking nails into the coffin of the *ancien régime*,—that his doctrines, when adopted by violent men of action, would be held to furnish a philosophical justification for the cancelling of their privileges and the burning of their châteaux, and that it would be well for the fashionable friends of the philosopher to have the wit to die before 1789. They did not know that; and Jean-Jacques, dazzled by their grandeur, flattered by their compliments, embarrassed by the difficulty of holding his own in circles to which he did not belong, could not have told them.

The first work which they read over his shoulder was *La nouvelle Héloïse*; and, of course, there was nothing alarming there. It was only a novel; and though novels may have tendencies, and even purposes, the sermons preached in them, like the sermons preached on the stage, do not count unless we happen to agree with them.

A complete analysis of the story is hardly called for. Students have read it; and the general reader has the courage of his conviction that it is not worth reading. It is very long, and it is altogether out of date. The friendliest relation of the plot could not possibly rescue it from the ridicule due to a change in the world's scale of sentimental values. It is enough if one can baldly indicate what it is, and what it stands for, and why it made so potent an appeal at its hour, and why the savour of it has so evaporated that it strikes the present generation as sentimental balderdash.

First, then, what is it?

It is many things, but chiefly three: the story of

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the valet who loves the daughter of the house; the glorification of the simple pastoral life; the moralised idealisation of the *ménage-à-trois*.

Of course the valet is not called a valet. That was a stroke of daring reserved for Victor Hugo when he wrote *Ruy Blas*. Jean-Jacques was incapable of it because he had been a valet, and the iron had entered into his soul, and he knew by experience that the situation was sentimentally unacceptable unless embellished. Had he not himself been pulled up and sharply reprimanded by the mistress of the house in which he served at Turin for loitering in the ante-chamber in speechless adoration of Mlle de Breil? So he called the valet a private tutor, and that made all the difference. The sighs of a private tutor were sentimentally worthy of respect, though apt to be frowned upon by proud, worldly, and interested parents. In such circumstances—and in no other circumstances—could innocent hearts, born to love each other, be plausibly pictured as separated by cruel fate.

Love, up to that time, whether in French life or in French letters, had seldom figured as radiantly innocent. The married women, when they loved, had lovers, and innocence was wanting there. The girls of the better classes, secluded from the world and from the knowledge of good and evil, had no opportunity of loving. The talk of love in fiction was apt, therefore, to run on the lines of the smoking-room story; the principal exception occurring when men sentimentalised over courtesans, representing that, though their behaviour was equi-

eir hearts were as pure as the driven snow. t argument was not convincing. If the n's heart were as pure as the driven snow, ld not be a courtesan. A very young man, by passion and grateful for benefits enjoyed, hink otherwise; but the surer instinct of saw through the sophism. They perceived the courtesan's side at least, passion was lved.

assion for a private tutor, however, was , and belonged to a different order of ideas. te tutor was, or might be, a personable young ost lovable though most ineligible; and he o a girl's life, if he came into it at all, while t was still a virgin fortress, insidiously sapped, yet openly stormed, by the nascent sensation erious desire. What more natural than that ld love him? What more pardonable than should yield to him? Guilty in act, she ained innocent in spirit, a worthy object of y because it was the bidding of "nature" followed. Much might be forgiven her she had loved much. That was an emotional which could hardly fail in its appeal in an hich most women had much to be forgiven, t seek forgiveness on those grounds if they seek it at all.

indeed that Jean-Jacques' Julie, when one read her correspondence with her lover , strikes one as really more innocent in word deed. She knows a great deal too much; losophises on too many matters on which girls do not philosophise. The proof is in

the letter in which she appeals to her lover not to "take advantage" of her next time they meet, and in her reiterated references to her "desires," her "senses," and the "voluptuous pleasures of vice." Assuredly it is not the young woman whose heart is pure who prefaces the surrender of her innocence with provocative discourses in that tone. But Jean-Jacques knew no better, and had to do his best with such knowledge as he had. The women whom he knew most intimately were either women who had lost the bloom of innocence, like Madame de Warens, or women like Merceret and Thérèse, belonging to the classes in which speech is coarse and reticence is unknown. It was in this mire that he had to grope for his ideal of innocence. It was the confessions of these alcoves — the alcoves of Thérèse, of Merceret, and of La Padoana of Venice —that he had to translate into the language of sentiment and sensibility.

He did it well enough, at least, to deceive the sentimental of his generation. They read the speeches which he put into the mouth of Julie, not as the unseemly candour of a fast and forward girl, but as the arguments of a special pleader making out a case on her behalf; and the demonstration, so far as they grasped it, seemed to amount to this: that vice lost half its grossness when it became sentimental, and that the mere act of loving was virtuous, when happiness was found in it, because it was an act of obedience to the laws of nature.

The argument, of course, was fallacious. Drunkenness itself might be proved, by parity of reasoning, to be a virtue; and indeed the principle

tions are virtuous in proportion to the pleasure
l from them easily leads to all manner of
hing conclusions. But the fallacy was not one
any of the women who loved their neighbours'
ds were likely to be in a hurry to disturb. A
is far more concerned than a man to mistake
e for virtue when she is clasped in her para-
arms. George Sand was always cradling
in that illusion, though her lovers never did so.
helped to "feel good," and then to argue that
e she feels good she is good, is the secret desire
ly every woman who strays from the straight
Jean-Jacques, whether intentionally or not,
ed that service to the women of his generation;
ey repaid him with effusive tears of gratitude.
s one of the secrets of the enthusiasm which
velle Héloïse inspired.

further charm was doubtless found in the beati-
of the simple life. How far the men and
of the eighteenth century really wanted the
life, and how simple they wanted it to be, it is,
date, difficult to say; but that a good many of
ankered after a simple life of some sort—if only
nple life of opéra-bouffe—seems clear enough.
of them, like Talleyrand, looking back, after
rmoil of the Revolution, upon the elegant
ours of the period when the aristocracy was
preme, declared that no one who had not lived
nderstood the felicitous possibilities of life; but
not the impression which one gathers from
study of the life and manners and morals of
ne. The picture reflected there is of a decadent
, sick of its own grandeur though in no hurry

to resign it, wearied to death by its own ceremonious artificialities. The clergy had ceased to believe in themselves as the leaders of religion and thought; the nobility had ceased to believe in themselves as the natural leaders of men; a vague, indefinite malaise—a reluctant sense that perhaps all, after all, was only vanity—was in the air.

Men fled from it, though without precisely understanding from what they fled or why. Jean-Jacques' retreat was an object of mirth only because he struck attitudes and made theatrical exit speeches. There had been precedents for it, and it was itself to be a precedent. Montesquieu's retirement to his study and his estates, Voltaire's flight, first to the arms of his neighbour's wife in Lorraine and afterwards to the shores of the Lake of Geneva, Marie-Antoinette's secession from the Palace of Versailles to the Little Trianon, were all events of the same order—were all, that is to say, endeavours, more or less conscious and deliberate, to escape from life as the fugitives found it to simpler conditions, nearer, as they would have said, to nature.

Their Arcadia, it is true, was only the Arcadia of Watteau pictures and opéra-bouffe; but then the Arcadia which Jean-Jacques depicted for them hardly belongs to any other category. Is it not, if we are candid with ourselves, the Arcadia which is nearest to the heart's desire of all of us, unreal though we know it to be? And Jean-Jacques differed from the other poets of Arcadia in taking it, as he took everything, quite seriously. He was no realist; he was not in the least concerned to tell the truth about Arcadia. But he heaped up the detail so as to make the

ry Arcadia real. He had lived in Arcadia
ld do so; he had left it long enough to have
n all that was ugly or incongruous in the
His readers could not contradict him if
ould, and would not if they could, but only
to enjoy the communicative glow of his
n emotions.

y enjoyed the picture of Arcadia the more
Arcadia was painted as the tranquil abode of
age-à-trois.

t-Preux, it will be remembered—so much of
y must be recalled—was separated from his
ter having been her lover. He went for a
round the world, and he returned. Julie was
adame de Wolmar. M. de Wolmar knew his
ecret, but the knowledge made no difference
or, if it made any difference, it only disposed
welcome Saint-Preux as an old friend whose
for his wife was a proof of sensibility and
nent. He invited him to sit at his table, to
his house, and to act as tutor to his children.
e a point, as a supreme proof of his confidence,
g him alone with his wife. And all this in an
here of general goodwill and intense emotion,
by the ready tears of sensibility.

us, of course, who read it in an entirely
atmosphere, it all seems supremely ridicu-
Our tears, if we shed any, are the tears not of
ty but of laughter. There were some who
even at the time—Voltaire and Madame Du
among the number. Even Madame de
a disciple of Jean-Jacques if ever there was
ughed when she read the story as a girl. It

seems inappropriate to her that Julie, not having been virtuous, should talk so much of virtue. So it is. But that was not the view of the eighteenth century in general. Least of all was it the view of the women of the eighteenth century.

The *ménage-à-trois*, it must be repeated, was the great social feature of the eighteenth century. Marriages were never happy. The nearest approach to a happy marriage was an irregular union of this kind. The most that was asked of a husband was that he should be complaisant; and many husbands were complaisant; and many groups of men and women embraced more or less indiscriminately, without any interchange of jealous recriminations. Jean-Jacques, it is true, had failed in his attempt to insinuate himself as an active member of such a group. Saint-Lambert would not stand that sort of nonsense from him, from whomsoever else he might stand it. But the Duc de Boufflers had tolerated M. Luxembourg; and M. d'Épinay had tolerated Grimm; and the Marquis du Châtelet had tolerated both Voltaire and Saint-Lambert, who had also tolerated each other. The situation, in short, was rather the rule than the exception.

What Jean-Jacques did in *La nouvelle Héloïse* was to take the situation and moralise it, and treat it very seriously and very sympathetically, and plaster it over with talk about sensibility and virtue. The inferences to be drawn from the treatment were obvious and agreeable. Love was "natural"; to obey the dictates of nature was virtuous. And sensibility was a virtue; and weakness was a proof of sensibility; and one could live as one liked and yet be "good," simply

e one liked doing it. And in Arcadia too! would not live in Arcadia?

the maxim, if it then existed, "Be virtuous and ll be happy," Jean-Jacques may be said to have the further maxim, "Be sentimental and you e virtuous." Or we may say that he made ry sentimental; or even that he substituted ent for gallantry. It is an advance, of a sort – advance which women are always glad to make will let them. So when Jean-Jacques preached women, with rare exceptions, heard him gladly. ecame, so far as they were concerned, the most r man in France; and Madame de Genlis tells her Memoirs how Madame de Blot insisted, in esence of the Duc de Chartres, that "a woman sensibility would require to be of very superior indeed not to be willing to consecrate her life usseau if she could be sure that he loved her nately."

at was the pinnacle which he had reached desisting from fiction and turning to other s than love, he turned the flood of sentiment on es on which authority prescribed narrower limits liberty of speech. After *La nouvelle Héloïse* ed *Le Contrat Social* and *Émile*.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Le Contrat Social—Unhistorical character of the work—Its appeal to doctrinaires—Its relation to the French Revolution—*Emile ou de l'Éducation*—Significance and popularity of the treatise—The voice of the sympathetic man who took women seriously.

"*Man is born free, and is everywhere in chains.*"

THAT is the opening sentence of *Le Contrat Social.* It is also the most famous sentence, and perhaps the sentence which made the fortune of the book. It consists, as we see, of two propositions; no attempt is made to prove either of them, and both of them are demonstrably false. A poor beginning, one would say, to a controversial volume—an initial fallacy, not to be covered up by bombast but sure to be found out. And of course, after a lapse of time, it was found out; but the Revolution and the Terror had come first.

It passed muster and served its purpose, and was accepted and applauded for two reasons. In the first place, it sounded well; in the second place, nobody—or hardly anybody—knew any better.

Not only had no one at that time any conception of society as an evolving organism—nobody had yet even approached the study of the origin of society from the historic side. All that anybody said about primitive man was guess-work; and one guess was as

as another. Philosophers arrived at their state-
s about the natural man merely by abstracting
tributes of civilised men living in communities;
ney did this, not because they cared in the least
ow how primitive man had lived but because
alisations on the subject formed a convenient
for rhetorical antitheses. Their real concern,
s to say, was not with the past but with the
nt; and when Jean-Jacques said that man was
free but was everywhere in chains, his readers
recognised that this was only a fine way of say-
at Frenchmen, under the existing régime, enjoyed
berty than they ought.

e went on to say a good many other things,
y untrue from the standpoint of political philo-
but acceptable enough, with exceptions, as
s masquerading in philosophic guise; his central
sition being, of course, that systems of govern-
originated in a contract to which all the citizens
parties and whereby it was mutually agreed
g the parties that each should abdicate certain
ral" rights in view of the advantages to be
d from orderly administration.

istorically, as we all know, that is nonsense.
contracts have sometimes been entered into by
ed men organising new experimental communities
nt Simonians, Brook Farmers, and the like; but
ive man knew nothing of them. There never
social contract in Jean-Jacques' sense. But
y cared about that, and indeed it is not even
hat Jean-Jacques himself believed that such a
had ever, in fact, been signed and sealed. His
oint was this: that the exercise and acceptance

of authority implied such a contract; that the terms of the implied contract furnished a test by which systems of government might be judged; and that when governments ceased to carry out its terms their authority ceased to be valid and it was time to start afresh. The whole of the French Revolution, from the summoning of the States General onwards, was implied in those propositions. They struck at the divine right of kings and at the privileges of the clergy and nobility. It only remained for practical men to put the dots on the i's.

A good many of the i's indeed were dotted by Jean-Jacques himself. He spoke of general elections, universal suffrage, and constituent assemblies. He advocated an elective aristocracy, declaring that a hereditary aristocracy was "the worst of all." He ridiculed the idea of the benevolent despot animated by the love of his people:—

"The power which arises from the affection of the people is no doubt the greatest, but it is precarious and conditional. Princes will never be contented with it. The best kings want to have the power to behave badly if they like without losing their authority. It is vain for the political philosopher to tell them that, the strength of the people being identical with their own strength, their true interest is that the people should be flourishing, numerous, and strong. They know very well that that is not true. Their main personal interest is that the people should be weak and poor, and never able to resist them."

Kings, therefore, are not to be trusted, and

reignty can only properly be exercised by the
le acting through its representatives. The will
e majority is the "collective" will; and function-
resting upon the collective will, may be as
otic as they like. They may properly insist upon
rmity to the ideals of the majority, both in
ar and in religious matters. Atheists and
au. Catholics may equally fall under their ban,
be exiled or persecuted as bad citizens. The
are specially obnoxious because of their intrigues
Intolerance:—

Those who draw a line between civil and
ogical intolerance are in my opinion wrong.
two kinds of intolerance are inseparable. One
ot live in peace with people whom one believes
damned. To love them would be to hate God
punishes them. The alternatives are to bring
back into the fold or to put them to the torture.
rever theological intolerance is admitted, it is
d to have some civil effect. As soon as it
nces that effect, the sovereign ceases to be
reign, even in temporal affairs. The priests
ceforward are the true masters; the kings
nly their executive officers.

Now that there is not, and cannot be, an
sive national religion, all those who tolerate
rs should themselves be tolerated, provided that
dogmas imply nothing incompatible with their
s as citizens. But whoever ventures to say that
is no salvation except in the Church ought to be
d out of the State, 'unless the State is identical
the Church, and the Prince is also the Pontiff.'"

We will not discuss the proposition. The purpose of citing it is to show, as far as may be, by a single quotation just why Jean-Jacques' political philosophy aroused enthusiasm on the one hand and provoked persecution on the other.

It gave people what they wanted on its constructive as well as its destructive side. It proved—or professed to prove—in an age of reason, that the existing system of government, with its *lettres de cachet* and its unjust and capricious taxation, was unreasonable and ought to be swept away. It proposed, as an alternative, not liberty but a fresh tyranny resting on a basis alleged to be rational, and therefore appealing to the average discontented Frenchman, who is always at heart a doctrinaire with a scheme for setting the world to rights. It may be said to have foreshadowed all the proceedings which wrung from Madame Roland the expression: "Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" And it also gave the authors of those proceedings the title to say, "We are not political malcontents; we are not despots; we are not Jacks-in-office. We are the disciples of a philosopher who was also a Man of Sentiment."

The secret of the vogue of the book is probably there; and the fact of the vogue is indisputable. Marat, according to Mallet du Pan, was often heard to "read and comment upon *Le Contrat Social* in public places amid the plaudits of an enthusiastic audience." It became the Bible of the section of the Revolutionary party led by Robespierre—the Bible, that is to say, of those who made the Church a branch of the Civil Service, sent the atheistical Hébertists to the scaffold, and substituted the worship of the

eme Being for that of the Goddess of Reason.
e were the ultimate applications of the philosophy
nich the point of it depended.
was not in the nature of the case that they
be foreseen. If they could have been foreseen,
could have been avoided; and authority could
met revolution half way and disarmed it. Bu
rity, as usual, was blind, and mistook a sign of
mes for an impertinence. The author had said,
nplication, that the French monarchy was an
onal institution, that the French King was an
ssor, that there was no warrant for the privi-
enjoyed by the French aristocracy, that
rench clergy ought to be either subordinated
ivil magistrates chosen by the people or
led. Authority never suspected that a great
Frenchmen were of the same opinion; but it
indisposed to stand insolence even from voices
g in the wilderness. It was the less likely to do
cause the different estates of the realm had not
pitted against each other but had all been
ked at once. The book, in these circumstances,
ound to make trouble for the author, and it did
trouble for him; but the trouble first arose
nnection not with *Le Contrat Social* but with
le.

Emile is a book of about a thousand pages—a
, according to the more exact contemporary
lards of measurement, of about 400,000 words.
is a sufficient reason for declining to examine
detail here. The nearest approach to a final
ism crystallised in a phrase is contained in one

of M. Jules Lemaître's lectures. The treatise, says M. Lemaître in effect, though not precisely in those words, includes many things that are new and many things that are true; but the things that are true are not new, and the things that are new are not true. There are sage hygienic precepts; but in these Jean-Jacques had been anticipated by Tronchin. There are sound remarks to the effect that education counts for more than instruction; but these remarks had already been made by Montaigne and Locke. What is original relates to method; and this is impracticable and ridiculous.

Jean-Jacques begins, as usual, with a paradox which is also a fallacy. That is his trick of attracting attention. Let us have the fallacy before us:—

"*Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Creator; everything degenerates in the hands of man.*"

The proposition is contradicted by common experience as well as by the doctrine of Original Sin. Many mothers, in fact, have found a comforting proof of the doctrine of Original Sin in the contemplation of the natural and precocious naughtiness of their babies. But Jean-Jacques must not be taken to mean all that his words, literally interpreted, imply. His paradox is simply his way of saying that in a corrupt society the normal methods of education are bound to be bad, and that a new system of education must be devised if the children of degenerates are not to grow up to be still more debased. He gives that reason for expounding a new system, and then he proceeds to expound it.

o inquire whether it is a good or a bad system
d be a waste of energy. From the point of view
ractical paideutics it stands condemned by its
l assumption of exceptional, not to say im-
ible, conditions. It assumes a private tutor for
pupil—a private tutor who will receive no salary
wealthy bachelor—a friend of the child's father,
for the mere love of education, will live alone
the child in the country, devote his whole time
is one child's mental, moral, and physical welfare,
oting the charge of it almost as it leaves the
e, and continuing the superintendence, to the
ision of all personal interests and occupations,
it marries and settles down. Wealthy celibates
are at once able and willing thus to sink their
individualities and sacrifice their own pleasures
e well-being of their friends' children are surely
re as righteous men in Sodom. Wherefore,
quæstio. The central proposition of *Emile* is
ly more practical than if the author had recom-
led parents to send their boys to boarding-
ols in the moon. *Sandford and Merton* is a
d of sound common sense compared with it.
Still *Emile* counts for more than *Sandford and*
ton both in literature in general and in educa-
l literature in particular; and the reasons why it
so are tolerably plain. It was a manifesto; it
ared at the psychological moment. It philo-
ised; it attacked the Jesuits. Above all, it was
voice of a man of sentiment speaking to women
ntiment; and women of sentiment never stop to
ire whether a philosophy, educational or other-
, is capable of general application. All that they

care to ask is, Has it a message for them? If it has, they listen to the voice of the charmer. He is "sympathetic," they say; and that suffices. They are ready to leave all and follow the "sympathetic" man.

"Sympathetic" ought, indeed, to be one of our fixed epithets when we try to characterise Jean-Jacques. He was many other things besides, but he was nearly always that. The women who knew him personally, if they came to know him well enough, discovered his limitations. They discovered that he was silly and lacked *savoir vivre*; that he was not a gentleman; that he was prone to take offence and pick a quarrel about nothing; that he could be vain, egoistical, ungrateful, and even rude, with the boorish insolence of the *valet de chambre*. But their first impression always was that he was sympathetic. He took them seriously, and he identified himself with their interests—especially when his pen was in his hand. He wrote in *Emile* of matters of perennial concern to them, and he wrote with the quality which modern editors call "heart."

The women of the age seemed to be frivolous, but they were far more frivolous in conduct than in intention. Even women whose relations with their paramours were an open scandal, in so far as any love affair could be scandalous in that age, tried to compensate for their infidelity to their husbands by their devotion to their children. Madame de Luxembourg and Madame d'Epinay were two among many who did so. Madame Dupin and Madame de Chenonceaux were other model mothers who had more than once consulted Jean-Jacques as to the

way of bringing up their sons; and in the
ter of love, they all preferred, or were ready to
er, sentiment to gallantry. Their hearts were
y for the message of sentiment; and that
sage was contained in *Emile* no less than in
nouvelle Héloïse. It was not only a book about
s: it was also a book about babies and about
riage; and, even in so far as it was a book about
s, it approached the subject from a mother's rather
a father's point of view.

Jean-Jacques repudiated most of his own educa-
al theories before many years had passed. Only
e years later, when he was at Strasburg, an
irer told him that he was bringing up his son on
lines laid down in his treatise. "So much the
se for you, sir, and so much the worse for your
" was his reply. "I admire your courage," was
rejoinder to a correspondent who announced the
e intention in 1771. But his women readers
e not to foresee that lapse from consistency; and
ably it would hardly have distressed them if they
foreseen it. They took what they wanted from
book, not troubling themselves about the coherence
he philosophy or the practicability of the general
me. It contained much excellent advice; and
did not know that it had already been given by
ke, for they were not in the habit of reading
ke. It seemed to them original, and it came to
n with the authority of the sympathetic man.
They obeyed it — or at least as much of it as
emed reasonable to obey. In particular they
ed, almost *en masse*, the precept that every
her should nurse her own infant instead of send-

ing it to a foster-mother. Tronchin had exhorted them to do this, and they had taken no notice; but when Jean-Jacques spoke, they were converted. He spoke sympathetically, whereas the doctor had only spoken professionally—one can offer no other explanation; and the result is known to every one. Responsive chords were awakened even in the most frivolous bosoms; and the women who led the fashion had their babies brought to them in their boxes at the opera, and gave them the breast between the acts.

Sentiment and sympathy assuredly triumphed there; and there was a still more potent appeal to sentiment in the passages which tell of the crown and climax of Emile's education—to wit, his courtship of Sophie.

At this stage, if not earlier, the treatise becomes an idyll. There may be parts of it, as of *La nouvelle Héloïse*, which offend a modern taste. There is rather too much about Sophie's "senses," and "desires," and her "combustible temperament," and the self-consciousness which overtakes her when she begins to feel herself a woman—a consequence, no doubt, of the limitations of Jean-Jacques' own experience. He had never known any such virtuous maiden as he had set himself out to portray; he had only known such women as Madame de Warens, and Thérèse, and the Venetian courtesans; and he had to try to evolve a virgin out of his own inner consciousness, with disturbing recollections of the candours of those intimacies continually breaking in.

But let that pass. The age itself was more candid and outspoken than ours; and its candour ran, as a rule, in the direction of brutality and ribaldry. Jean-

Jacques' outspokenness was quite free from those faults. It was not salacious, and it was not jocular. It arose incidentally in the course of an attempt—the first in literature—to take women seriously. The women recognised the intention, and were grateful almost to the point of adoration. Let us recognise it too. The recognition will help us to fix Jean-Jacques' importance in literature.

Passion, of course, had always been taken seriously in literature; love had always been the theme of romance; the "face that manned a thousand ships" had inspired the earliest of epic poems. But the stories had all been men's stories, told from a man's point of view. It might be the point of view of the troubadour; it might be the point of view of the rake; it might be the point of view of the love-lorn youth sentimentalising over the woman who was no better than she should be. It was always, at any rate, the point of view of some kind of gallantry; and the view of gallantry is objective, and also cynical, even when it seems to be sentimental.

Jean-Jacques' new departure consisted in trying to look at the woman's life from the woman's point of view. She was for him primarily an individual, and only secondarily an object of man's desire. He took not only her actions and her visible attributes, but also her psychology—even her morbid psychology—seriously, trying to write of her as she might have written of herself if only she had known how, but with a certain added deference and chivalry. The writers who do that are the writers whom women call "sym-

pathetic"; they are also the writers whom women like best, and whom they most delight to imitate. And so it has been with Jean-Jacques. He was worshipped by the women of his time—especially by the women who did not know him personally; and, in succeeding generations, women far more than men have composed under his influence. All the writers of the Romantic Movement, of course, from Chateaubriand to Victor Hugo, are in a sense, and to some extent, his debtors; but his daughter in the line of literary succession is Madame de Staël, and his granddaughter is George Sand.

That is the significance of *Emile* from the point of view of the historian of literature. Its importance from the point of view of the biographer lies in the fact that it got its author into trouble.

CHAPTER XXIX

The beginning of persecution — The motive for it — Jean-Jacques threatened with arrest and warned to fly at once — Decides to seek refuge in Switzerland — Hurried departure — Arrival at Yverdon — Forbidden to remain there — Madame Boy de la Tour's offer of hospitality — Jean-Jacques accepts — Settles at Motiers — Throws himself on the protection of Frederick the Great.

ALREADY, nine years before the publication of *Emile*, Jean-Jacques' writings had attracted the suspicious attention of the authorities. Our witness is d'Argenson,[1] in whose Diary for April 16, 1753, we read :—

"Jean-Jacques Rousseau of Geneva, an agreeable writer who fancies himself as a philosopher, says that men of letters ought to make three vows : to be poor, to be free, and to speak the truth. That has caused the Government to regard him unfavourably. He has expressed his sentiments in several prefaces. There has consequently been a good deal of talk about him in the cabinets, and the King has said that it would be a good idea to have him locked up in the Lunatic Asylum at Bicêtre. His Serene Highness the Comte de Clermont added that it would be a still better idea to have him whipped there. They are

[1] The d'Argenson to whom Diderot dedicated his *Encyclopédie*.

afraid of these philosophers who speak their n
. . . It is the Jesuits who are instigating this p
of persecution."

That storm, however, blew by without brea
Jean-Jacques had forgotten all about it; and the
storm took him by surprise. He had supposed
he had written as the champion of true religion
he suddenly found himself threatened with appr
sion as its enemy.

We need not go into the theological minut
the case against him. All theological controv
are arid; and this one is quite out of date.
passages to which orthodoxy took exceptio
mostly contained in the *Profession de foi d'un V
Savoyard*: a sort of Sermon on the Mount in
a sympathetic ecclesiastic who has lapsed from
but reformed himself gives Emile the rudimen
religious instruction. His teachings are those of
is commonly called "natural religion"; he leave
the Church and the creeds and deduces his doc
from the experience of the human consciousnes
the contemplation of the world. We may put
we like—if, that is to say, we adopt Jean-Jac
point of view—that he leaves out the accidental
confines himself to the essentials. But, of c
there is another point of view. There are p
who sincerely believe that the essential thin
religion are the mythology, the metaphysics, an
ecclesiastical organisation. From their point of
Jean-Jacques was a heretic, if not a schismatic
worthy to be dealt with as such.

It did not follow that he actually would be

secuted; for the policy of persecution was then, as it has generally been, conducted upon opportunist principles. Observing the immunity enjoyed by some of his contemporaries, Jean-Jacques might most reasonably have asked why one man might steal a horse while another (himself to wit) was not allowed to look over the stable wall. He was far nearer to the standpoint of the Church than to that of the Holbachian atheists; he might almost have been regarded as the ally of the Church against the atheists. But—*non tali auxilio, non defensoribus istis!* The Church had its own reasons for attacking him and leaving the atheists alone.

The atheists, together with the Deists of the school of Voltaire, constituted a formidable party, at once dangerous, unscrupulous, and evasive. They had a way of saving themselves, and also saving the face of authority, by publishing their pamphlets anonymously, printing them abroad, smuggling them into France, and denying all responsibility for them. Jean Jacques had no party; and he signed his books, and had them printed in France. Consequently he was an easy victim; and it happened that a victim was, at the moment, wanted. An attack on the Jesuits was in preparation. It was undesirable that this attack should be represented as an impious persecution. The best way of avoiding that was to open the campaign of persecution in the name of religion by persecuting some one who had assailed the Catholic faith. A superficial appearance of impartiality might be thus presented. And Jean-Jacques, by publishing *Émile*, gave authority the handle that it wanted, exactly when it wanted it.

He afterwards suspected that a plot ha
elaborately engineered for his confusion by tho
called themselves his friends; but there is no e
of anything of the kind. His belief was base
the fact that Madame de Luxembourg persuad
to print in France, whereas he had originally m
print in Holland; but her innocent purpose
only to have been to enable him to make bette
for the book. She made terms for him, in fact
good terms for the time; and her friend,
Malesherbes, the King's Librarian, suggest
alterations which would secure the book the a
of the censor. By all the rules, everything o
have gone well after that. Only, there were
within wheels, and machinations behind the
Madame de Luxembourg, like Jean-Jacques
had miscalculated; and it was Jean-Jacques w
to stand the consequences.

The day preceding the catastrophe, Jean-
tells us, was one of the most tranquil of his lif
went for a picnic in the woods with two O
priests. Having forgotten to bring wine glass
them, they drank through straws from the
"Never in my life," he says, "was I so gay."
he went home to bed, and, feeling sleepless, to
the Bible and read the Book of Judges.

"The history moved me extremely" (he co
"and I was pondering over it in a kind o
when I was suddenly startled by hearing a n
seeing a light. Thérèse, who was carrying the
was lighting the way for M. La Roche,[1] who

[1] Confidential servant of the Maréchal de Luxembo

me sit up with a start, said: 'Don't alarm yourself. I come from Madame la Maréchale, who writes to you herself and forwards you a letter from the Prince de Conti.' Enclosed with Madame de Luxembourg's letter I found a note conveyed to the Prince by an express messenger, informing him that, in spite of all his efforts to prevent it, the decision had been taken to prosecute me with the utmost rigour of the law. 'The excitement,' the missive ran, 'runs high. There is no means of averting the blow. The Court demands it; the Parlement consents. At seven o'clock in the morning his arrest will be ordered, and officers will instantly be despatched to take him. I have obtained the concession that if he takes to flight there shall be no pursuit; but if he stays he will be apprehended.' La Roche implored me, on behalf of Madame la Maréchale, to get up at once and go and consult with her. It was two o'clock in the morning, and she has just gone to bed. 'She is waiting for you,' La Roche added, 'and will not go to sleep without having seen you.' I dressed myself as fast as I could, and ran to the château."

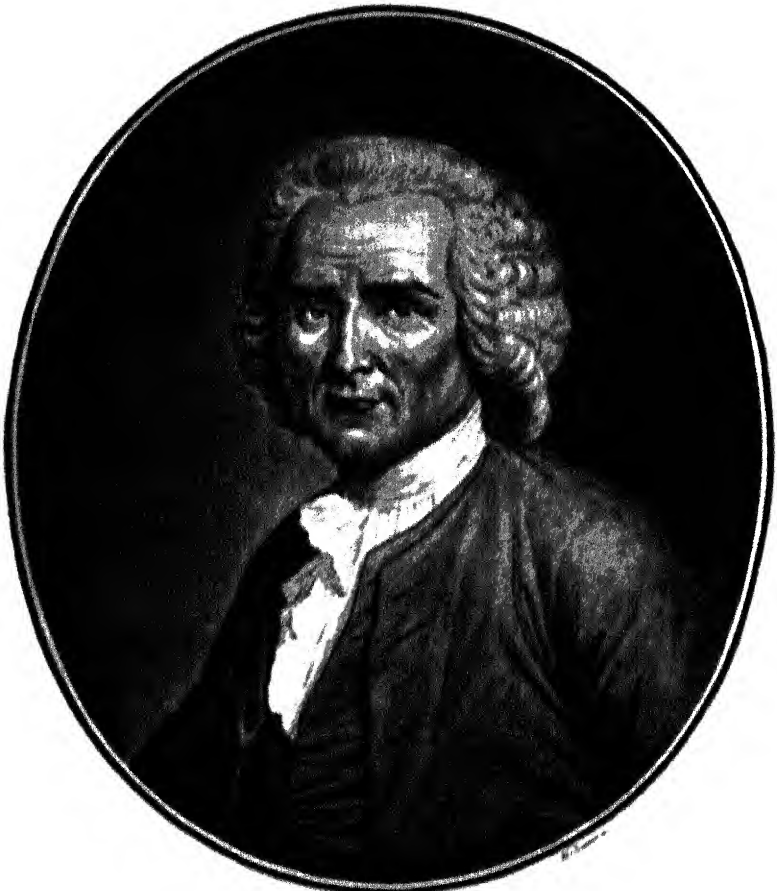
He must leave the country at once; that was the decision of the conference. His narrative gives the impression that he was hustled over the frontier by friends who, having got him into his trouble, ought to have stood by him and seen him through it, and should have been much more grateful to him than they were for consenting to go instead of trying to shelter himself behind them. It may have been so; but the suggestion is not very convincing.

His friends, on his own showing, had done their

best to prevent the issue of the warrant, and it had nevertheless been issued. If he had gone to prison they could, and doubtless would, in the course of time, have got him out again ; but it was quite beyond their power to prevent him from going there, otherwise than by getting him out of the way. He knew that as well as they did, and he was in no fit state to face imprisonment with equanimity, or endure it without injury to his health. His nerves were highly strung, as all his letters show, and there was his infirmity to be considered. Imprisonment would have involved separation from Thérèse, whom he needed, not as a mistress but as a sick nurse. Flight, in those circumstances, was the lesser of the two evils between which he had to choose. If he chose it himself, as he must instinctively have done, it would have been false kindness on the part of his friends to try to dissuade him.

They wanted him to go to England, offering to give him introductions and see that he was properly looked after. He had "never liked either England or the English," and insisted upon going to Switzerland instead. M. de Luxembourg offered to keep him in hiding for a few days at the château, so that he might have leisure to frame his plans ; but he preferred to go at once. The Marshal therefore helped him to sort his papers and pack, and gave him a travelling carriage, and lent him horses and a postilion for the first stage of the journey. It was arranged that Thérèse should follow him, as soon as possible, with his dog and the rest of his effects, and that Madame de Verdelin should take care of the cat.

The preparations were only a matter of hours. It



Jean Jacques Rousseau

was two o'clock in the morning when Jean-Jacques got his news of the warrant; it was only a little after midday when he took his departure for the place of exile, embraced, as he stepped out to take his seat, by Madame de Luxembourg, Madame de Boufflers, and Madame de Mirepoix—"a flattering honour," he says, "which I was not expecting." The officers sent to arrest him passed him on the road, and saluted him with smiles and bows. Their orders, as the Prince de Conti had indicated, were to inquire for him at his domicile, but not to chase him as a fugitive. He crossed Paris, recognised by every one but stopped by no one—every one understanding the farce that was being played. And so to Switzerland.

His first intention had been to take refuge at Geneva; but, on reflection, he doubted whether Geneva would receive him kindly. Geneva, though a republic, was an oligarchy, not a democracy; and he had ruffled Genevan susceptibilities by commending the citizens for their drunken habits. Fearing, therefore, that they would not be very glad to see him, he turned aside and entered that part of the territory of Berne which is now the Canton Vaud. Arriving there, he stopped the carriage and got out and kissed the earth—the soil, as he supposed, of liberty.

Even in the land of liberty, however, persecution still pursued him. The news soon came that his book had been burnt at Geneva, and that he himself was forbidden to set foot on the territory under penalty of arrest; and then the example of Geneva was followed by their Excellencies of Berne.

Jean-Jacques was at Yverdon—the little old-world

town that stands at the southern end of the Lake of Neuchâtel. He had experienced "the joy, not less pure than intense, of being embraced in the arms of the respectable Roguin." The Governor of the town had "encouraged him by his acts of kindness to remain." A friend had offered him a house to live in, and had even set to work to furnish it for him. The day on which he should move into it had been fixed; Thérèse had been written to, and told to come; and then, without warning, the storm burst. In the territory of Berne, as in the territory of Geneva and in France, Jean-Jacques was to be arrested. The Governor privately gave him warning of the instructions he had received. Once more Jean-Jacques was without a home, and had to find one in a hurry.

Where to go? It was indeed a difficult problem. France, Geneva, and Berne—Berne then including the whole of the Canton of Vaud—were closed to the fugitive. England was too far away, and he had travelled enough for the present. There remained, however, Neuchâtel, not then a Swiss Canton, but a dependency of the King of Prussia, governed in his name by the Scotch Jacobite, Marshal Keith.[1] Frederick the Great was a friend of philosophers, and was the more likely to tolerate Jean-Jacques because he had quarrelled with Voltaire. Under his rule, therefore, a place of refuge might be found. And "the respectable Roguin," as it happened, had a niece—Madame Boy de la Tour—who was just then on a visit to her uncle.

She was the widow of a Lyons banker, and suffi-

[1] He had fought at Sheriffmuir, and been Prussian Ambassador to France and to Spain.

ciently a woman of business to carry on the bank. She owned a house, already furnished, at Motiers, in the Val de Travers the valley from which the asphalt comes. Her son had been living in it and had left it, and now it was empty. There was no chance of finding a tenant, in the ordinary way of business, for a house in such a place. Would Jean-Jacques therefore, she asked, allow her to lend it to him? She would prefer him to accept it gratuitously; but he might pay a small rent if his pride insisted. He availed himself of the offer, being scarcely in a condition to decline it. Roguin took the six hours tramp with him over the mountains, and installed him comfortably in his new home; and then he sat down and wrote his famous letter to the Prussian King:—

"I have spoken evil of you in the past; perhaps I shall do so in the future. Nevertheless, expelled from France, from Geneva, and from the Canton of Berne, I come to seek an asylum in your dominions. Perhaps that is what I ought to have done in the first instance—this eulogy is one of those which you deserve. Sire, I have merited no other favour at your hands, and I ask for none; but I thought it my duty to inform your Majesty that I was in his power, and that it was my wish to be so. Your Majesty can dispose of me as he sees fit."

CHAPTER XXX

At Motiers—Hospitality and friendship of Marshal Keith—Correspondence with strangers—And with Madame Boy de la Tour—Adoption of Armenian garb—Rejoined by Thérèse—d'Escherny's picture of Jean-Jacques' life at Motiers.

FREDERICK THE GREAT was no bigot, as he proved when asked to interfere in a controversy that broke out at Neuchâtel on the vexed question of eternal punishment. If, he said, the Neuchâtelois were so anxious to be damned eternally, damned they might be for anything that he cared. He now welcomed Jean-Jacques with equal tolerance, but more affably, bidding his Marshal say that he was "very happy to afford an asylum to persecuted virtue," though he hoped that the virtuous object of persecution would write "nothing scabrous" during his sojourn in his dominions, and would avoid exciting the citizens, who were far too prone to lose their mental balance in their theological disputations.

The Marshal delivered the message, with compliments and glosses of his own. "I admire your talents and respect your morals," he wrote in his first letter; and he invited Jean-Jacques to visit him at Colombier,[1] offering to send a horse or a conveyance to fetch him, suggesting that he should bring his housekeeper with him, and begging him to accept a

[1] On the lake, a few miles from Neuchâtel.

cartload of vegetables as a present. With regard to the limitations imposed upon his literary activity, he added: "You cannot want to set fire to the house in which you are living, and it is my own wish that you should find yourself comfortable in your place of refuge."

In the end, as we know, Jean-Jacques was to kindle the conflagration which the Marshal feared for him,—we shall come to that story presently. For the moment, desiring a quiet life, he was satisfied to act on the Marshal's advice. Our picture of him is the picture of a man with means sufficient for his necessities, provided by the sale of three successful books, and with nothing particular to do.

Circumstances were presently to furnish him with occupation. The excitement of further persecution was in store for him,—we shall soon come to that story too. His life's work was done. He had sown the seed which was, for many years to come, to produce a continual and increasing harvest; and before the harvest reached fruition he was to have to fight yet again what seemed a losing battle in defence of his ideas. But not immediately. A period of comparative tranquillity was to intervene; and the picture of his private life may fairly be kept apart from the story of his public activities.

Motiers, where he had taken up his abode, was a village built on the flat floor of a wide bare valley, hemmed in by considerable hills. One can approach it now from Neuchâtel through the weird narrow gorges of the Areuse; but that dark gorge has only lately been made accessible by means of footpaths, galleries, and rustic bridges. It was impenetrable

then; and Jean-Jacques' way out and home lay over the mountain barrier. He did not mind that, at least in summer, being still a good pedestrian at fifty, but often tramped down to see friends at Neuchâtel, or Colombier, or even Pontarlier, and joined in picnics on the Chasseron or in the Creux-de-Van. For the rest he sat in the doorway of his house, making laces—shoe laces and stay laces—which he presented to young women who promised to rear their children on the lines prescribed in *Émile*; or he whiled away the hours by playing cup-and-ball;[1] or he attended to his voluminous correspondence; or he received the innumerable visitors who came to waste his time.

His best friend was Marshal Keith, whom he permitted to present a sum of money to Thérèse, who offered him gifts of "wheat, wine, and fire-wood" in the royal name, and turnips and green stuff on his own behalf, and cherished a project, never to be realised, of taking Jean-Jacques back to Scotland with him, and sharing a house there with him and David Hume. He was a simple-minded old gentleman, still more simple-minded than the Maréchal de Luxembourg, no idle hunter after celebrities, but a sincere and cordial friend. Other friends, as devoted if less influential, were Moultou, the broad-minded young pastor of Geneva, once a suitor, it is said, for Madame Necker's hand, and d'Ivernois, the *procureur-general* of Neuchâtel, and Dupeyrou, the richest citizen of Neuchâtel, and the Comte d'Escherny, to whom we owe some piquant reminiscences[2] of this period of his

[1] He was very fond of the game, which he praises in his *Confessions* as an excellent substitute for conversation.

[2] *Mélanges de littérature.*

They all exchanged visits with him; some of
n went plant-hunting in his company.
The great mass of the visitors, however—and the
t multitude of the correspondents also—were
ngers. The former—unknown nonentities whose
es need not trouble us—made pilgrimages from
to see him, with or without introductions, some
hem no doubt from a genuine desire to pay their
age to genius, others, we may assume, prompted
by vulgar curiosity. The latter argued with
or consulted him, on all imaginable subjects on
h it seemed likely that his genius could throw
. Some of their letters have been printed; others
preserved in manuscript in the public library of
châtel. M. Fritz Berthoud, who has carefully
ied the great mass of correspondence, summarises
follows in his *J.-J. Rousseau au Val de Travers*:—

' A Prince of Würtemberg, infatuated with *Emile*,
ls himself at Lausanne for the express purpose
ringing up his little girls, only recently born, in
rdance with the precepts of the master, and, so to
under his eyes. Rousseau lends himself to this
of children's governess as if he had nothing more
rtant to think of or to do. A very young man
has just got married consults him as to the duties
husband and a father; another desires to be told
familiarities he may permit himself with his
ress without losing the right to consider himself a
ous man. An abbé and nobleman who is half
nbeliever does not know how to reconcile the
icting claims of his rank, his scepticism, and his
siastical career, and appeals to Rousseau to get

him out of the difficulty. An officer whom Jean-Jacques' books have disgusted with the trade of war wishes to become an author, and submits pastoral poetry for criticism. A husband begs him to explain to his wife, who loves him too much for his peace of mind, that it is necessary for him to leave home in order to attend to his business. A prodigal son solicits his kind offices in obtaining his father's forgiveness; a dancing master reproaches him with having spoken too frivolously of this serious art. Several correspondents, while accepting the philosopher's principles, ask for explanations and proofs; while others, touched by his errors, wish to convert him, and send him voluminous dissertations. One may form an idea of the number of these zealous missionaries from the reply addressed to one of them: 'I have lying in front of me at the present moment no less than twenty-three refutations of my doctrines which reached me before yours. When your turn comes I shall be happy to tell you, if you wish me to do so, what is my candid opinion of the document."

Those were the days, it must be remembered, when the postage on letters had to be paid by the recipient; and it is not surprising that Jean-Jacques complained of the financial burden thus inflicted on him. Accustomed to live on sixty louis a year, he had to spend ten louis on postage in the course of a few months—a circumstance which naturally disturbed the equilibrium of his budget. He paid, however, though he did not look pleasant, and answered as many of the letters as he could. On the whole, too, he seems to have been as affable as could reasonably have been

expected with the hero-worshippers. He did indeed contrive a way of escape from them – along a balcony, down a back staircase, through a barn, and out through a back door—but he did not avail himself of it very often. As a rule he let the strangers talk, going on with his lace-making or his game of cup-and-ball the while. Sometimes, if he liked the look of them, he invited them inside and offered them refreshment. No doubt he had moods, more often than he admits in the *Confessions*, when such interruptions to the contemplative life were not unwelcome. For, after all,—the point is important to the picture,—he had, except at moments of spasmodic activity, nothing particular to do.

The picture given in the *Confessions* is well known, but cannot be trusted without reserve. The exile, according to Jean-Jacques, is "the beginning of the darkness in which I have for the last eight years been entombed"; but the darkness was rather in his mind at the time when he wrote than in his life at the time which he depicted. He represents himself as studying botany as an escape from life, and weeping as he walked over the hills to call on Marshal Keith at the thought of "the amiable virtues and the gentle philosophy of that respectable old man." But the tone of the Correspondence is quite different. Men spoken of in the Autobiography as bores who forced their company upon him appear in the letters as congenial friends who could never come too often and never stay too long;[1] and in fact, the evidence that cheerfulness kept breaking in on his philosophy is overwhelming.

[1] D'Ivernois, for instance. In the *Confessions* Jean-Jacques writes that d'Ivernois "had the audacity to spend three whole

A portion of the true picture may be found in the correspondence with Madame Boy de la Tour, recently published by M. Léo Claretie. She was a friend, not a mistress; a Martha rather than a Mary; a capable motherly person, interested not in the philosopher's philosophy but in his comfort. Her own philosophy was merely that philosophers were feckless creatures who needed looking after. Her friends' friends were her friends, and Jean-Jacques was to be treated as a man of genius because they told her that he was one; and the best service that a sensible woman like herself could render to a man of genius was to do his shopping for him.

She was privileged to do it during the whole of the three years which he passed at Motiers and during several subsequent years as well. The correspondence mostly relates to the purchases which Jean-Jacques asked her to make on his behalf- purchases of the most varied and sometimes the most intimate character, the list of which would read like an extract from the catalogue of some Universal Provider. It is useless to try to classify them; but they include notepaper, penknives, nails for hanging pictures, tinder for striking lights, surgical instruments, dress materials for Thérèse, sealing-wax, smoked tongues, oil, twine, jam, candles, mittens, coffee, toothpicks, spectacles, night-caps, gloves, slippers, boots, a coffee-mill, and a harpsichord. The letters relate to these matters and hardly to any

days with me in an inn, though I tried to drive him away by boring him and by showing him how much I was myself bored by his society." Referring to the Correspondence, we find that he invited d'Ivernois to meet him in the inn, saying, "I await with anxiety the pleasure of embracing you."

others. They show us Jean-Jacques, no less than his friend, anxious and troubled about many things to which philosophers are commonly assumed to be indifferent; and we gather from them, among other facts, that it was Madame Boy de la Tour who fitted Jean-Jacques out with that Armenian costume which he wore for so many years to the astonishment alike of acquaintances and strangers.

An Armenian tailor who visited Montmorency had first given him the idea of it. The flowing robes, he felt, would be convenient in view of his constitutional derangement. He had taken the opinion of Madame de Luxembourg on the proposal, and it was favourable. Probably she thought it in accordance with the fitness of things, that the personal appearance of philosophers should be grotesque; probably Jean-Jacques suspected that she was laughing at him. At all events, he postponed the execution of his plan. At Motiers, however, where there were no young bloods to ridicule his eccentricities, he returned to it. There, public opinion was represented by the pastor, M. Montmollin; and it was the pastor whom he consulted. Montmollin raised no objections. The Armenian garb, he laid down, not only need cause no scandal if adopted for purposes of locomotion, but might also be worn without impropriety when Jean-Jacques attended divine service and knelt at the Holy Table.

Jean-Jacques therefore took his own measures according to sartorial directions, and wrote letter after letter to Madame Boy de la Tour to make sure that his instructions were exactly carried out in every detail. He examined and criticised materials, returned a fur cap that had been made too small to fit his head,

weighed the comparative advantages of various linings and girdles, but gave a free hand in the matter of colour, stipulating only that it should be rather "modest" than "loud" and should not in any case be scarlet. He was sorry, he said, if his meticulous directions gave trouble, but it was really essential that the garment should be stylish—the sort of garment in which he could decently dine with Mylord Marshal on week-days and receive the sacrament on Sundays without giving any enemy occasion to say that he sought the means of grace in his dressing-gown.

It is a pleasant picture, even if it verges on the grotesque; and the dandyism which it indicates is in striking contrast with the morose misanthropy which Jean-Jacques attributes to himself at this stage in the *Confessions*. The joy of life and the love of humankind are never quite extinct in the man who retains pride in his personal appearance; and we may find collateral evidence of the serenity of Jean-Jacques' temper at this time in the reminiscences of his friend d'Escherny.

A scion of a French family expelled at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, d'Escherny, now about thirty years of age, was a cultivated amateur of philosophy and letters. He had been to Paris, and lived on terms of friendship with the Encyclopædists. At the house of one or other of them he had met Jean-Jacques, though he had not been presented to him. Now he was living in a small cottage at Motiers, dividing his time, as he says, between study and field sports, but modesty prevented him from making any overtures towards his illustrious neighbour. One day, however, at a village fête,

Thérèse, who, no doubt, finding the time heavy on her hands, had satisfied her curiosity about all her neighbours, came up and spoke to him :—

"'How is it, sir,' she asked, 'that you have been here all these months and have never called on M. Rousseau?'

"'Because I have heard, mademoiselle,' I replied, 'that M. Rousseau is not fond of callers, and objects especially to those who importune him with their company; and I have no wish to enrol myself in the number of the importunate.'

"'You need not be afraid of that,' she rejoined. 'I can undertake to say that M. Rousseau will be very glad to see you.'

"Two days later I responded to this invitation, and found Jean-Jacques sitting on a little stone bench in front of his rustic house, basking in the rays of the sun, which one does not seek to avoid in the month of February. He first looked at me and then at the garment he was wearing. 'It is mad, but I find it convenient,' were his first words, as he pointed to it."

Thus the philosopher and the amateur of philosophy made acquaintance; and having made acquaintance, they often dined together. According to the *Confessions*, the food procurable in the Val de Travers was intolerably coarse and bad; but d'Escherny gives us a very different impression. This is his reminiscence of the banquets :—

"Let me say a word about the excellent meals which I enjoyed alone with Jean-Jacques in his house. The cooking was simple, as he liked it to be, and I

quite shared his tastes in that respect; but never was a better plain cook than Mlle Le Vas She served us succulent vegetables, and leg mutton from sheep bred in the valley where the thyme blows, of an admirable flavour and excell roasted. The Areuse supplied us with the sa trout with which it abounds, and never at any in Paris have I eaten such quails and woodcoc we enjoyed there at the proper season; they veritable balls of fat. We drank not only the wi the country but those of Cortaillod, which in good are comparable with the best wines of Burgundy

Then follows this glimpse at Jean-Jac interior:—

"Our conversation was brisk and animated turned upon all manner of subjects, followin logical course. The mountain air is keen, so there was more continuity in our appetites th our dialogues. . . .

"Mademoiselle Le Vasseur came in from to time and interrupted our *tête-à-tête*. Rou made merry at her expense and sometimes at but I returned his chaff. I complimented Ml Vasseur on her cooking; but what surprises that, in spite of my invitations, Rousseau would allow her to sit at table with us. . . .

"We took coffee, but no liqueurs. Some after dinner, Jean-Jacques sat at his harpsichor accompanied me while I sang Italian airs, or sang himself. When he came to my house I us sing him songs which he or I had composed, a

panying myself on the harp. We vied with each other to see which of us could set the best music to the same words. On summer evenings we walked in the woods in the neighbourhood. He liked to sing duets by moonlight on the banks of the Areuse; and we always had plenty of listeners, chiefly the village girls, who never failed to come out to hear us sing."

In the summer there were frequent botanising excursions and picnics. D'Escherny tells us that he learnt a long list of Latin names of plants in order that he might take an intelligent part in the expeditions. Du Peyrou, Colonel de Pury, and Dr. Gagnebin—"hired by us at 12 francs a day"—were the other members of the company. They drove a mule with them, placing "pies and hams and poultry" on its back; and the repasts were "gay, noisy, animated, and gluttonous."

"It was at this very time" (says d'Escherny) "that he was complaining to all Europe of his sufferings and his infirmities; but I never saw him in any way distressed. He seemed to enjoy the very best of health; he walked well, and even skipped and jumped, and ate with a vigorous appetite."

And he slept well too, though he protested that he did not, even when the wanderers had to take their night's rest in a hay-loft.

"On the following morning we asked each other, as one always does, 'How did you sleep?' 'As for me,' said Rousseau, 'I never sleep anywhere.' But Colonel de Pury interrupted him with his vigorous

military accents: 'Good heavens, M. Rousseau, you surprise me. I heard you snoring all night long. It is I who have not closed my eyes. Confound this filthy hay!'"

Then there follow other stories of other happy days and nights on which Jean-Jacques unbent. Sometimes he played cup-and-ball with d'Escherny; sometimes he played "the game of goose"; sometimes he told good stories of his old friends at Paris, though he refused to speak of Grimm—"the only man whom I have ever been able to bring myself to hate." Once even, if d'Escherny is to be believed, he "emptied several bottles of the excellent wine of Cortaillod," though "we placed the pillars of Hercules of our excesses at a very mild degree of inebriety."

That is the picture of Jean-Jacques as others saw him at the time when he saw himself, in retrospect, as a miserable invalid, hunted, persecuted, spied upon, and wrapped in gloom. Much of the gloom, we may infer from it, was an afterthought begotten of the darkness that obscured the later days. Much of it, but not all. Jean-Jacques was really neurotic and really ill in other ways, though the keen mountain air of the Jura—specially recommended to the neurotic by our modern doctors—gave him relief for the time. Nor did his mountain picnics make up the whole of life for him, though it might have been well for him if they had done so. There was a side of his nature which he did not show to d'Escherny, and he had interests and troubles of which he did not speak to him. Further storms were brewing and had already begun to break.

CHAPTER XXXI

Death of Madame de Warens—Letter from M. de Conzié—Disputation with the Archbishop of Paris—*Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont*—Quarrel with Geneva—A war of pamphlets—*Lettres écrites de la montagne*—Quarrel with the pastor of Motiers—Jean Jacques summoned before the Consistory—Does not appear but sends Thérèse with a letter—The pastor resolves to preach him out of the parish—Jean Jacques' windows broken—He once more takes to flight.

It was while he was at Motiers that Jean-Jacques heard the news of the death of Madame de Warens—"the best of women and mothers." The loss, he writes, was "painful" and "irreparable"; but it is to be feared that when he says that, he is only using a sentimental figure of speech, and that he deceives himself in adding that his only reason for not writing to her on his arrival in Switzerland was the fear of "saddening her heart" by the recital of his misfortunes.

Jean-Jacques was no stoic, and never shrank from reciting his misfortunes to any one who was willing to listen to him. The cessation of his correspondence with Madame de Warens had really dated from the time of his unrequited passion for Madame d'Houdetot. Since then she had been for him only a withered old woman who needed help which he was not in a position to give. Her sufferings had been so painful to his sensibility that he had had to put them out of his

mind, and she had had to die to recall herself to his memory. Even her death had, in the end, come to mean so little to him that when he came to write the *Confessions* he had forgotten when it happened. He places it in 1764, whereas it really occurred in 1762; the tidings reaching him in a letter from M. de Conzié, in a paragraph at the close of a letter mainly devoted to other matters:—

"You ask me to tell you about our worthy friend, the Baroness de Warens. Some ill-considered reflections caused me to omit all mention of the subject when I wrote to you; but I will now tell you, my dear Rousseau, that at this hour she is happy, having about ten weeks ago quitted this miserable world in which she lived, the victim of many maladies and much distress, abandoned through the injustice of humankind. But now, I doubt not, her beautiful soul is enjoying the recompense for its virtues and its pains. If you were less of a philosopher . . . I would try to suggest some thoughts for your consolation; but I know that you do not need them."

Assuredly he did not need them, in spite of the sentimental tribute paid to the memory of his benefactress in the *Confessions*. At one time the death of Madame de Warens would have been a sorrow and a calamity. Now it was only an item of news. The habit of separation and the flight of time—her gradual lapse from dignity and his rapid rise to fame—had slowly smothered the affection which his jealousy of the barber who supplanted him had left alive. That is abundantly clear from his letters, of which we possess several, to M. de Conzié. There is hardly

rd in them about his grief. The writer stands , as it were, an impassive mourner, while the past buries its dead. The funeral over, he ns at once to talk about his own affairs—his itations, his annoyances, his health, and his e to leave Motiers and seek a fresh retreat.

The first disputation was with Monseigneur de mont, Archbishop of Paris, and Commander of Order of the Holy Ghost, who had issued a ge to the clergy, denouncing *Emile* as a per- us book, blasphemous and full of heresies, and dling all and sundry to read it.

He was right enough from his own point of view. sacerdotal pretensions depend, in the last resort, the assertion that it is sinful to dispute them. assertion is not necessarily convincing because s conveyed in bombastic phraseology, but employment of the grandiose style in ecclesi- al pronouncements often serves its purpose. uttresses authority and is a convenient aid to leception. No one knows better than the prelate the use of the still small voice only becomes the who has an intelligible proposition to advance is prepared to make it good by proofs. In all r cases the soundest rhetorical policy is to shout pponent down. The policy of Monseigneur de mont in this respect was only the common policy heological apologists. He purchased the chance t being thrown at all by taking the risk of being wn very heavily indeed. With many antagonists might have succeeded; but Jean-Jacques, as it ened, was too strong for him.

The argument need not detain us. On the Archbishop's side, indeed, there is none. His style is that of the controversialist in the village tavern who silenced his adversary with the remark, "I'm not arguing with you; I'm telling you." All that his declamatory exercise really amounts to is the statement that the teaching of the Savoyard vicar is not identical with the teaching of the Catholic Church. Obviously it is not; and if he had been content to let the statement go forth in its naked simplicity, Jean-Jacques would never have troubled to contradict him. But he imputed motives, and he treated "natural religion"—the religion which the experience of life suggests and which springs like a fountain in the human consciousness—as a superlative manifestation of impiety. That brought Jean-Jacques down into the arena like David with his sling and pebbles.

An encounter of that kind—an encounter between a great man who is great only in virtue of the delusive dignity of sacerdotal office and a great man who is great through natural genius and intellectual training—can only have one issue. Professional pomposity may for a season impose upon the blundering masses of mankind, but it is powerless when the sharp weapon of incisive dialectic is turned against it. The only doubt is as to the manner in which its inevitable discomfiture will be effected—whether ridicule or moral earnestness shall slay it; and in the course of the eighteenth century it had to die each of these deaths in turn.

Ridicule was the favourite method of Voltaire. A theologian who ventured to cross swords with him was very soon made to look foolish. Jean-

Jacques adopted a more dignified, gladiatorial style. His tone was that of a man who was not less but more religious than the ecclesiastic. His life had been, and was to continue to be, a moral and religious evolution. He had passed through Protestantism and through Catholicism to a more sincere and simple creed. The beliefs which had set most mark on him were those of the Pietists, absorbed in such strange circumstances from Madame de Warens. He had found God, he would have said, not in the Church but in the Bible, in the world about him, and in his own heart. On the moral side he was no doubt assailable, but it was not on that side that he was assailed. He was attacked as irreligious—he to whom religion had come to be an instinct and an emotion—he who read his Bible nightly before he slept—he who had harangued the atheists in a frivolous age with solemn and eloquent remonstrance! The sense of wrong roused him to the white heat of indignation. There was no hollow mockery in his rejoinder. He addressed the Commander of the Order of the Holy Ghost from the pinnacle of moral superiority, and left him looking and feeling like an abject and miserable worm.

A worm that did not even turn. There was no reply to the *Lettre à Christophe de Beaumont*. The Commander of the Order of the Holy Ghost accepted the rebuke of the Citizen of Geneva with a bowed head, in silence. That is the solitary fact which history has chronicled to his credit.

The first disputation had hardly ceased before the second had begun to rage.

Exasperated at finding himself, contrary to his expectations, a prophet without honour in his own country, Jean Jacques wrote a letter resigning his rights as a Genevan citizen, and a war of pamphlets followed. The curious can thread the mazes of that complicated quarrel in M. Edouard Rod's admirable monograph, *L'agonie de J. J. Rousseau*. They will see there that the questions at issue were partly religious but partly also political. The orthodox Conservatives of the Republic objected to Jean-Jacques not only because he undermined the faith of their fathers but also because he advocated the extension of the suffrage. He had his party in the town; but it was in a minority, and the Government was against him. A member of the Tronchin family attacked him in *Lettres de la campagne*. He retorted with *Lettres écrites de la montagne*. The book was condemned to be burnt by the common hangman. That is as much of the story as one needs, at this distance of time, to remember. The importance of the story to our narrative resides in its repercussions in the territory of Neuchâtel in general and the village of Motiers in particular.

There, as at Geneva, there were cross currents and conflicting parties, on the one hand the appeal to bigotry, and on the other hand the appeal to Cæsar.

The citizens of Neuchâtel were, on the whole, a very orthodox community. They had unfrocked a pastor for doubting whether they would be damned eternally, and Frederick the Great, called upon to calm the agitation, had tried to calm it, as we have seen, by telling them that it made no difference to

him whether they were damned eternally or not. The King, however, had undertaken to protect Jean-Jacques; and some of his subjects were loyal, and felt that they owed allegiance to him rather than to any clerical Synod or Consistory. When, therefore, the pastors made representations to the Council of State, the Council wrote to the King to ascertain his wishes.

They forwarded a copy of the resolution which the assembled pastors had voted, and submitted reasons both for and against the proposed suppression of *Emile* and *Lettres de la montagne*. On the one hand, they suggested, these writings might cause trouble in a country in which "the tiller of the soil, whom one would suppose to be fit only for rude agricultural operations, is of a strangely speculative disposition and occupies his leisure in the reading of all kinds of books." On the other hand, they pointed out that negotiations had been opened for the printing of an edition of the objectionable author's collected works, and it would be a pity to allow any other town than Neuchâtel to reap the profits of the undertaking. What did their sovereign think?

Frederick's reply was to the effect that the Council might decide for itself whether the works in question should be reprinted in the Principality, but that there must be no prohibition of the sale of copies printed elsewhere and, above all, no molestation of the author. He was quite firm about that; and when he heard that his wishes had not been literally carried out, and that there had been demonstrations and "tumultuous assemblies," he wrote a second letter, very peremptory in tone, expressing

his extreme displeasure, and insisting that Jean-Jacques should be afforded "complete and effectual protection."

The civil power, thus roughly reminded of its duty, had no choice but to obey. It did so, without enthusiasm for Jean-Jacques (though individuals were enthusiastic) but with the quiet satisfaction which a secular authority always feels in rapping an ecclesiastical authority over the knuckles. The ecclesiastical authorities, however, were not very amenable to secular dictation; and the feelings of Pastor Montmollin were worked upon by the letters of his brother in bigotry, Jean Sarasin, pastor of Geneva, who kept him advised of the course the controversy was taking and sent him a parcel of polemical literature bearing on the subject. M. Montmollin read that his parishioner "ought to be held in horror by all virtuous citizens," and that he resembled "the hyena which eats the babies in the south of France," with much more to the same effect. He had not suspected anything of the kind; but now he began to doubt his own judgment, to reconsider his position, and to ask himself whether he had not, after all, been harbouring a viper in the bosom of his parish. He therefore summoned Jean-Jacques to appear before his Consistory and particularise his religious convictions.

The Consistory consisted of the pastor and six peasants. The proper answer to such persons, when they presume to discuss theology with men of letters, is a dignified rebuke for meddling with matters which are too high for them. Jean-Jacques, instead of administering the rebuke, proposed to confound them with argument; but he had reckoned

without his constitutional nervousness. He who had parleyed with the Commander of the Order of the Holy Ghost as Omnipotence might parley with a black-beetle, felt his knees trembling with apprehension at the thought of appearing personally before a jury of bucolic theologians. They sat and waited for him, but he did not come, deciding, at the eleventh hour, to send his housekeeper with a written statement, couched, not in defiant, but in conciliatory language.

The case was called, and the deposition was put in evidence. Montmollin fought for a verdict by foul means as well as fair. He tried to bring his theologians over to his point of view by regaling them with absinthe; and, when they had drunk enough of it to be blind to the exactitudes of procedure, he recorded the vote of his deacon, who was not entitled to a vote. Nevertheless, when the votes were counted, there was a majority of one against him; and he perceived that, if he wanted to get rid of his troublesome parishioner, he must seek other means of doing so.

Left to himself, he might have been content to let the matter drop. He wanted to receive "paying guests" in the parsonage; and three such boarders were offered to him by one of Jean-Jacques' friends at Neuchâtel. He temporised and quoted terms. But Du Peyrou attacked him in a pamphlet, and made him angry; and Sarasin stirred him up again by writing: "No one thinks any good of M. Rousseau. It would be a great advantage if you got him to go and live somewhere else—the farther off the better." Thus was oil flung on the flames;

and Montmollin let the sun go down upon his wrath, and rose in the morning, resolved to preach Jean-Jacques out of the parish. He opened the campaign on Sunday, September 1, 1765.

We have no report of the sermon, but we have a full report of its effects. As the feelings of Montmollin had been worked upon by the exhortations of Jean Sarasin, so the feelings of the populace were worked upon by Montmollin's discourse. They shouted after Jean-Jacques in the street, calling him "Antichrist" and "false prophet"; they threw stones at him; they smashed his windows.

Doubts have been thrown upon his own circumstantial narrative of the outrages. The legend has been handed down that the *charivari* was organised by Thérèse.[1] She was bored, we are told, in the Val de Travers, and wanted to get back to the shops and excitements of the cities; so she bribed the village boys to make a disturbance, and broke the window herself, and produced the stones to prove that that was how they had been broken. The story is improbable on the face of it, though it is likely enough that Jean-Jacques exaggerated his annoyances and feared more dangers than he actually incurred; and the collateral evidence does not bear it out. The Archives of the Commune of Motiers report the outrage almost exactly as Jean-Jacques himself reports it. A resolution may be read in the parish register to the effect that representations shall be made on the matter to the Châtelain, and that the village watchman (or constable) shall be given a gratuity and admonished to take steps to prevent

[1] See Gaberel's *Rousseau et les Genevois.*

a recurrence of the disturbances; and there is also the deposition of the Châtelain himself, from which this essential passage may be taken:—

"Awakened by the cries that I heard in the street, I ran immediately to M. Rousseau's house, and found both him and his housekeeper in an indescribable state of alarm. He implored me to ensure their safety by stationing a guard before their house for the remainder of the night. On the following morning I opened a further enquiry" . . . etc.

That seems conclusive. Thérèse, that much-abused woman, has evidently been wronged in this particular. The *charivari*, after all, is not an unknown manifestation in the Swiss life of our own times, as some unpopular University professors can attest, and doubtless it was more frequent in that ruder age. Jean-Jacques may be said to have invited it from the first by the grotesqueness of his apparel, for such oddity always arouses prejudice; and when the finger of scorn was pointed at him from the pulpit, a *charivari* easily, if not inevitably, followed. The minister of the gospel, therefore, beaten in argument, appealed to the baser passions of his flock and triumphed; and Jean-Jacques, scared out of his wits, felt that he must once again take his staff and scrip and resume his pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XXXII

Jean-Jacques seeks shelter in the Ile de Saint-Pierre—His two months' sojourn there—Evicted by order of the Bernese Government—Takes a lodging at Bienne—Fears of further annoyance—Sets out for Berlin—Arrives at Strasburg—Accepts Hume's invitation to England—Joins Hume in Paris—His stay in Paris—Starts with Hume for London.

THOUGH the actual decision to depart was taken in a hurry, the project of departure had long been entertained. Jean-Jacques' growing disgust with Motiers and its inhabitants appears every now and again in the letters to Madame Boy de la Tour, in the midst of demands for boxes of candles and packets of tooth-picks; and he also constantly talks of moving in his correspondence with M. de Conzié, who offers him hospitality and a quiet life in Savoy, and promises that, if only he will abandon his Armenian apparel and wear breeches as of old, no one, in the absence of that mark of identification, will know who he is.

Then, almost without warning, came the *charivari* and the breaking of his windows. The pastor had, as he writes, "openly placed himself at the head of a band of cut-throats," and made his continued residence at Motiers impossible. Where, then, to go? An asylum was offered to him in the neighbouring village of Couvet. The villagers there had already shown themselves well disposed to him. They had elected him a member of their commune,

and had sent the son of a notable with their best char-à-banc to fetch him to the ceremonial at which the freedom of the commune was conferred upon him. Couvet, however, was too near to Motiers to offer him a quiet life. The echoes of Montmollin's eloquence were likely to resound all up the Val de Travers. Wherever they were audible, *charivaris* were likely to be organised; and Jean-Jacques, like little Nell's grandfather, felt the need of getting "farther away." Leaving "Thérèse and the luggage" at Motiers, he walked over the hill to Neuchâtel.

He feared a second attack before he could get away, and took his precautions against it. "I am well armed," he wrote, "well protected, and in a very determined frame of mind. Do not be uneasy on my account. The ruffians, I promise you, will find us ready to receive them." They would have found, in fact, not, as the words might have appeared to imply, a philosopher waiting for them with a stick, but a posse of constables stationed outside the door and compelling them to keep their distance. They knew this—they saw it indeed, for constables are not invisible—and Jean-Jacques, left unmolested, joined his friends on the lake shore, and, after a week's delay, sought shelter in the Ile de Saint-Pierre.

The island is on the Lake of Bienne, opposite Neuveville (a small town about half-a-dozen miles from Neuchâtel), whence nowadays excursion steamers ply to it in summer. Jean-Jacques had visited it with some of his Neuchâtel friends, and had been charmed with it. As it was in Bernese territory, he had sounded the authorities as to their willingness to let him remain there, and it had been unofficially inti-

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mated to him that he would be left in peace. So he crossed over, and made an arrangement to lodge with the tax-collector, and sent directions that Thérèse and the luggage should follow in a cargo boat.

It was September when he arrived; and he sojourned there for two mellow autumn months—two months, it would seem, of unbroken tranquillity and unalloyed enjoyment. His life has no history during that time of quiet, though many pages of beautiful prose are consecrated to his recollection of it, both in the *Confessions* and in the *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*. A few visitors crossed the water to see him, but not many, and he had a way of escape from tedious intruders—a trap door in the floor of his sitting-room, through which he could disappear, if he chose, as soon as he heard a stranger's step upon the staircase. For the rest, he botanised, and helped the tax-collector to gather in his harvest of apples, and went with Thérèse to plant a colony of rabbits in an adjacent islet, and lay for hours in a boat, letting the currents drift him whithersoever they would; while, in the evenings, he sat alone for hours on the beach, "especially when the waters of the lake were rough."

"I took" (he says) "a curious pleasure in watching the waves break at my feet. They seemed to me to symbolise the tumult of the world, contrasted with the peace of my habitation; and the thought sometimes moved me so much that the tears ran down my cheeks. . . . 'Ah, how gladly,' I cried to myself, 'would I barter my freedom to depart, which is nothing to me, for the assurance that I should be

allowed to remain here for ever. . . . It is a little matter to be allowed to stay. Would that they would condemn and compel me to do so!'"

What would have happened if such a sentence had indeed been passed is an idle speculation. Jean-Jacques was not to be given the chance of exhausting the charms which he saw in the face of solitude. The "new Robinson," as he styled himself, was not to repeat on the Ile de Saint-Pierre the tragedy of the elder Robinson on Juan Fernandez. Berne had its eye on him, and for reasons best known to itself—very likely, that is to say, for no reasons at all—was determined to move him on. The decision was conveyed to him by M. de Graffenried, Governor of the district of Nidau. "His letter," says Jean-Jacques, "showed keen disapproval of the order, which he only intimated to me with regret." The letter is preserved in the manuscript department of the Neuchâtel public library, and the expressions of regret run as follows:—

"The cause for which you suffer is too good a cause not to furnish you with every conceivable consolation. The whole earth is the fatherland of the man of honour, and you will assuredly find somewhere a country in which the friend of humanity will be cherished and loved."

So the term of quiet was over, just as Jean-Jacques was settling down to it. The few letters which he wrote during the too short period of his retirement breathe, no less than the *Confessions*, the serene spirit of contentment with the simple life. The desire to

live the isolated life of a "new Robinson" for ever is expressed in them, and is not, therefore, to be regarded as a sentimental afterthought. He sends ten baskets of apples, plucked with his own hands, to a lady who has presented him with a parcel of coffee. He begs that certain necessaries of life may be forwarded to him—four razors, some gilt-edged paper, some old newspapers ("for I find it difficult to get out of the habit of reading the newspaper all at once") and a snuff-box (not to cost more than thirty-six francs) which he proposes to offer as a New Year's present to his landlady. And then, of a sudden, it is :—

"My dear friend, they are turning me out of this place. The climate of Berlin is too severe for me. I have decided to go to England, where I ought to have gone in the first instance."

Once again he separated himself from Thérèse and the baggage, and took boat for Bienne, at the head of the lake, where a deputation of sympathetic citizens met him on the landing stage, and begged him to remain. Bienne was a Free Town in those days—an *enclave* in which the writ of their Excellencies did not run. It seemed reasonable to stay there, at least until the spring, so as to avoid the discomfort of a long winter journey. Sympathisers from Berne pressed Jean-Jacques to do so, and so did the Secretary of the French Embassy at Soleure, who came to Bienne to see him. He was "caressed," he tells us; he yielded to "caresses"; did he not suspect that underneath the "caresses" there lurked "an ambuscade." He took a lodging; he wrote to

ask a friend in Paris to send him "some amusing novels"; he proposed to spend the winter in cataloguing his library.

The lodging, however, was uncomfortable. It was a "horrid little room looking on to a courtyard" in which a dresser of chamois skins conducted his unsavoury trade. The friends who had welcomed Jean-Jacques went back to their homes at Soleure and Berne, leaving him once more a stranger in a strange land, and he saw reason to doubt whether a majority of the Biennese desired his company. A contemporary letter, written by a M. Perregaux to his brother-in-law, M. Meuron, procureur-general, and published in M. Berthoud's book, shows that his doubts were well founded.

A M. Kirchberger, we gather, who was "devotedly attached to M. Rousseau," sounded the principal magistrates of the locality on his friend's behalf. He reported that though "several of them were well disposed to him," others were reluctant to "close their eyes" to his presence for fear of giving offence at Berne; and he concluded that "M. Rousseau could not pass the winter at Bienne without exposing himself to a good deal of annoyance, and had better take advantage of the fine weather in order to travel to Berlin," where Marshal Keith was anxious to welcome him. Yet again, therefore, he was moved on, and yet again he departed in a hurry, leaving Thérèse and the baggage behind. "My dear friend," he wrote to Du Peyrou, "I have been deceived. I start to-morrow, that I may get away before they turn me out. Write to me at Basle, and please look after my poor housekeeper."

He arrived at Basle on October 30, "ill," he says, but well enough to resume his journey on the following morning. By November 3, he was at Strasburg, needing rest, suffering from "fever and inflammation of the entrails," and "no more fit to go to Potsdam than to go to China"; but though Strasburg was then in France, he found himself unexpectedly among friends. The note of serenity reappears in his correspondence — a note to which we pause to listen because we now hear it from him for the last time. "Reassure yourself, my dear friend," he writes to Du Peyrou, "and reassure our friends as to the dangers to which you believe me to be exposed. I am meeting with every mark of kindness. All those in authority both in the town and in the province are of one accord in showering favours upon me." And he goes into details :—

"The manager of the theatre is extremely attentive. He has given me a private box for my exclusive use, and has had a key made for me so that I can enter unobserved through a back door, and selects his repertoire with a view to pleasing me. I should much like to show my gratitude for his kindness, and I think that some little piece of my composition, whether good or bad, would be useful to him in view of the interest which the public is taking in me."

He begs Du Peyrou, therefore, to search among the papers which he has left behind, and extract and post to him a couple of manuscript plays which he will find among them. It seems the most

natural thing in the world to him that his prejudices against the theatre should melt away in the genial sunshine of popular applause, and that when cheerfulness broke in upon philosophy, philosophy should be forbidden to intrude upon private life. He was enjoying himself—redeeming the time before the shadows fell again—to the disadvantage of his precarious health. "Frequent dinners in town and the society of women and persons of fashion" made him ill and obliged him to "break it all off and become a bear again." The journey to the Prussian capital was more than ever out of the question. His publisher's invitation to visit Amsterdam was even less acceptable. "All things considered," he writes to d'Ivernois, "I have decided to go to England"; and, after further consideration, he decided to travel by way of Paris, and wrote to Du Peyrou, asking that "some pocket handkerchiefs and a cup-and-ball" might be forwarded to him there.

The warrant for his arrest had not been withdrawn, but there was little risk of its execution so long as he behaved with circumspection. His friends procured him a passport. The Prince de Conti promised to let him take sanctuary in the Temple—a kind of Parisian Holyrood. It was arranged, through the instrumentality chiefly of Marshal Keith, Madame de Verdelin, and the Comtesse de Boufflers, that David Hume should meet him in Paris, and conduct him across the Channel, and help to settle himself on English soil. It seemed an ideal arrangement; for Hume spoke French fluently, enjoyed equal respect in the best circles of both countries, and had displayed a particular and benevolent interest in Jean-Jacques.

Jean-Jacques was contented, and even gratified, and wrote to Hume to say so. He was not only, he said, following the counsel of Mylord Marshal and Madame de Boufflers, "whose enlightened goodwill to me is at once my guidance and my consolation":—

"It is also, I venture to say, the counsel of my own heart, which is pleased at placing itself under so great an obligation to the most illustrious of my contemporaries, whose goodness surpasses his glory. I long to find a free and solitary retreat in which I can end my days in peace. If your benevolent cares procure this for me, I shall enjoy at once the only benefit which my heart desires, and the pleasure of feeling that I am indebted for it to you."

That letter is dated December 4, 1765. On December 9 Jean-Jacques started for Paris, and on December 15 he arrived. In due course Thérèse, described by Hume as "very homely and very awkward," followed him with the luggage.

All Paris—all the women of Paris, at all events—ran after him. His Armenian garb, no less than his philosophical doctrines and his strange experiences, made him the object of universal curiosity. "There is no cessation," he wrote, "in the stream of callers, and I have not a moment to myself." When he dined out he was petted, and when he walked abroad he was stared at. One could fill a volume with anecdotes of his behaviour and that of his *dévotes*, as the women worshippers were styled; but the best synoptic view is in a letter written by Hume to Dr. Blair. He gives us a graphic glimpse at

Jean-Jacques in a salon, where he told a story of a Swiss woman who had called him "an impious rascal," and said that she would like to blow out his brains :—

"He then turned to Madame de Boufflers who was present, and said, 'Is it not strange that I, who have wrote so much to decry the morals and conduct of the Parisian ladies, should yet be beloved by them, while the Swiss women, whom I have so much extolled, would willingly cut my throat?' 'We are fond of you,' replied she, 'because we know that, however you might rail, you are at bottom fond of *us* to distraction. But the Swiss women hate you, because they are conscious that they have not merit to deserve your attention.'"

Then follows a more general picture :—

"It is impossible to express or imagine the enthusiasm of this nation in his favour. As I am supposed to have him in my custody, all the world, especially the great ladies, tease me to be introduced to him. I have had rouleaux thrust into my hand, with earnest applications that I would prevail on him to accept of them. I am persuaded that, were I to open a subscription here with his consent, I should receive £50,000 in a fortnight. The second day after his arrival, he slipped out early in the morning to take a walk in the Luxembourg Gardens. The thing was known soon after. I am strongly solicited to prevail on him to take another walk, and then to give warning to my friends. Were the public to be informed, he

could not fail to have many thousand spectators. People may talk of ancient Greece as they please; but no nation was ever so fond of genius as this, and no person ever so much engaged their attention as Rousseau. Voltaire and everybody else are quite eclipsed by him."

Hume adds that Jean-Jacques was a modest man, who did not care to be a public character. As a proof he tells us that "two very agreeable ladies breaking in upon him discomposed him so much that he was not able to eat his dinner afterwards." Perhaps. But other people who met him at the same time were of the contrary opinion, and they too give chapter and verse for their estimate of him. The most typical story of the kind is that related by Madame de Genlis, and quoted in a footnote in Burton's *Life of Hume*:—

"Rousseau had promised to accompany her to the Comédie Française, on the condition that they were to occupy a *loge grillée*. When they entered, Madame flew to shut the grating; Rousseau opposed her; he was sure *she* would not like it to be closed, and he would be sufficiently hidden by sitting behind her. In the scuffle, he was recognised; madame, vexed and terrified, insisted that the grating should be closed; but he was inexorable. The commencement of a popular piece soon relieved them from notice, and, when the eyes of the audience were averted from him, Rousseau grew gloomy and rude. He afterwards professed himself offended at having been exhibited like a wild beast."

Both stories may be true; and the key and ex-
nation of both of them may lie in the fact that the
nity which clouded Jean Jacques later years was
beginning to descend upon him. There will be
e to be said about that insanity presently, when
e circumstantial and conclusive evidence of it
s us. The facts mentioned, if they stood alone,
ld establish eccentricity; and Hume, at this stage,
lly seems even to have recognised that his protégé
eccentric. He found him "mild, and gentle, and
lest, and good humoured," and declared that he
"more the behaviour of a man of the world than
of the learned here, except M. Buffon."

Admiring and liking Jean-Jacques for these
able qualities, he took him to London in the early
s of January 1766. Thérèse and the luggage
wed, as usual, by a later conveyance; and this
Thérèse had an escort:—

"I learn" (Hume writes) "that Mademoiselle sets
post, in company of a young friend of mine, a
ng gentleman, very good humoured, very agree-
—and very mad! He visited Rousseau in his
ntains, who gave him a recommendation to Paoli,
King of Corsica; where this gentleman, whose
e is Boswell,[1] went last summer in search of
entures. He has such a rage for literature that
ead some event fatal to our friend's honour."

But that, of course, is only Hume's little joke.
only portrait of Thérèse which has descended to
erity is an irrefragable proof of that.

[1] *The* Boswell.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Symptoms of insanity—Life in London—Jean-Jacques lodges with a farmer at Chiswick—Accepts Davenport's invitation to Wooton—The quarrel with Hume—The forged letter composed by Horace Walpole—Jean-Jacques denounces Hume.

THE story of Jean-Jacques' visit to England is the story of his quarrel with Hume. It is a dispute over which ink has been spilt abundantly, not only by the disputants, but by their respective backers. All the illustrious persons of the day were mixed up in it, or dragged into it, or spontaneously took a hand in it—from Horace Walpole to Voltaire, from Lord Marshal Keith to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, from Baron d'Holbach and Madame de Boufflers to Turgot and Bishop Warburton. Only a year or two ago the acrimonious controversy was revived by Mrs. Frederika Macdonald, who argued at great length that Jean-Jacques was indeed, as he loudly exclaimed that he was, the innocent victim of the malicious machinations of an ill-conditioned company of conspirators.

There are no proofs of any such conspiracy, and there was no motive for it. The storm raged simply and solely because Jean-Jacques was mad, and his friends did not know it. One may almost say that he had taken an unfair advantage of them by going mad without informing them of the fact. They called him

mad, it is true. D'Alembert and Warburton both spoke of him, in so many words, as a fit candidate for Bedlam. But this was vulgar abuse, not sympathetic diagnosis. The psychology of dementia was hardly understood in that age, even by specialists in lunacy. Still less did laymen understand it. They recognised the irresponsibility of the raving maniac and the doddering idiot of the man who stripped himself naked in public, the man who believed that he had committed the "unpardonable sin," and the man who announced himself as John the Baptist or the Messiah; but the insanity which manifests itself in baseless suspicions of impossible intrigues was not distinguished by them from hatred, malice, and uncharitableness. They did not know that excessive egoism, such as Jean-Jacques displayed, is itself a symptom of an unbalanced mind, prone to delusions and unaccountable for them. We know it well enough nowadays, however; and our knowledge is our key to the interpretation of Jean-Jacques' conduct. Armed with that key, we easily perceive that his whole behaviour in England, from the day when he landed to the day when he left, is that of a lunatic of whom monomania gradually takes possession.

Exactly when he began to be mad no one can say. He was, from his own account, neurotic from the first; his early neurotic tendencies must have been aggravated by his early vices. Very possibly—very probably, indeed—the progress of the derangement which always threatened him was arrested by the domestic amenities of his irregular establishment with Thérèse, and it is easy to believe that he might have remained sane if only he had remained obscure. A first strain

on his nervous organisation, however, was imposed by notoriety, and a second by persecution. He was a nobody, a watchmaker's son, an intellectual parvenu, alternately tolerated and snubbed in fashionable circles. Then he woke up, first to find himself famous, and then to find himself driven from pillar to post—an object of exaggerated veneration, and yet at the same time an exile, a preacher of republicanism who, except through the charity of princes, had not where to lay his head. Here was the simultaneous appeal to his sense of injustice and his vanity. His egoism could not resist the invitation. It grew and grew and grew. It became a second nature to him to make himself conspicuous, whether in the city or in the wilderness; and, whenever he was not accepted at his own valuation, suspicions darkened his mind, and he pictured his friends secretly leagued with his open enemies against him. In a word, he was going mad, and nobody knew it. People called him mad, not to excuse but to insult him.

Already, in Paris, Hume had observed symptoms which, if he had been an alienist, would have placed him on his guard :—

"I am well assured" (he writes to Dr. Blair) "that at times he believes he has inspirations from an immediate communication with the Divinity. He falls sometimes into ecstasies, which retain him in the same posture for hours together."

It may be that some sane men are subject to trances of this kind, but the alienist always views them with suspicion. Suspicion, too, might well have been

aroused by Jean-Jacques' behaviour on the landing-stage at Dover. "Transported with delight," he writes to M. de Malesherbes, "at reaching the land of liberty at last, and at the thought of being conducted to it by such an illustrious man, I fell upon his neck and embraced him passionately without a word, covering his countenance with my kisses and my tears." It must have been embarrassing; but Hume, though very seasick, submitted with a good grace. His letters contain no account of the incident; but possibly there is an allusion to it in the letter to Madame de Boufflers —the first written to her after disembarking — in which he says: "My companion is very amiable, always polite, gay often, commonly sociable," and adds: "He does not know himself, when he thinks he is made for entire solitude," and further: "He has an excellent warm heart. . . . I love him much, and hope that I have some share in his affections."

D'Holbach had warned Hume that he was cherishing a viper in his bosom; but Hume had not believed him, and nothing happened for some months to remind him of the admonition. He and Jean-Jacques, whether they quite understood each other or not, believed themselves to be the best friends in the world; and Jean-Jacques seemed to enjoy being lionised. Public opinion, it is true, was not unanimously in his favour. Dr. Johnson, for one, took the robust view that he ought to be transported to Botany Bay for corrupting the young by immoral writings; but Dr. Johnson was in a minority. Most people raved over his books, took his side against his oppressors, and sought his acquaintance. Garrick invited him to the theatre, placed a box at his disposal, and entertained

him at supper after the play. Lord Bute went botanising with him in the Thames valley. The Duke of York called on him. The King was persuaded by General Conway to offer him a pension. And Hume meanwhile looked out for a house in which he could board.

Probably it was in the course of the house-hunting expeditions that the little rift began to show itself within the lute. Jean-Jacques, in Hume's view, was a big baby who needed a vast amount of looking after, and whose desire for solitude ought not to be humoured more than was absolutely necessary. He was also a poor man who could not afford a heavy rent, and a proud man apt to feel insulted if a stranger tried to place him under an obligation. Starting from these premises, Hume took a common-sense view of the situation, and negotiated on his friend's behalf with farmers in Surrey and market gardeners in Fulham. Ultimately he made an arrangement with a farmer at Chiswick, and Jean-Jacques settled down there with Thérèse for a season, but was not satisfied.

Of the reasons of his dissatisfaction he and those who observed him give different accounts. In Hardy's *Life of Charlemont* we read that "when he first arrived in London he and his Armenian dress were followed by crowds, and as long as this species of admiration lasted he was contented and happy." The implication is that he wanted to get away because he found himself no longer the notability of the hour. His own account of the matter is that inquisitive people stared at him and pestered him, and that

he wished to place himself out of their reach. Presumably his motives varied with his moods; and it is credible enough that, liking to attract attention, he nevertheless resented being exhibited like a dancing bear to spectators of only secondary importance. In any case, what he really wanted was not a farmer who would board him as a matter of business, but a distinguished patron who could consent to be his landlord for the sake of the pleasure of his company, —some English analogue of the Maréchal de Luxembourg. While all the farmers in Surrey were being asked, one after the other, whether they would be willing to receive him, that was the thought that was really at the back of Jean-Jacques' mind.

Presently, however, offers of the right sort of hospitality began to arrive. A Mrs. Cockburn wrote from Edinburgh:—

"Lord bless you, bring Rousseau here. . . . Sweet old man, he shall sit beneath an oak and hear the Druids' songs. The winds shall bring soft sounds to his ear, and our nymphs with the songs of Selma shall remember him of joys that are past. O bring him with you; the English are not worthy of him; I will have him! I cannot speak to him, but I know his heart, and am certain I could please it."

We do not know for what reason Mrs. Cockburn's invitation was not accepted. The invitation proffered by Mr. and Mrs. Townsend, who had five thousand a year and lived near London, was cancelled for a very specific reason:—

"He has desired him to live with him, and offers to take any board he pleases. M. Rousseau was much pleased with this proposal, and is inclined to accept of it. The only difficulty is that he insists positively on his gouvernante's sitting at table—a proposal which is not to be made to Mr. and Mrs. Townsend. This woman forms the chief encumbrance to his settlement. . . .

"*P.S.*—The project of Mr. Townsend, to my great mortification, has totally vanished, on account of Mademoiselle le Vasseur."

Then there were *pourparlers*, which came to nothing, for the purchase of a Colonel Webb's place in Surrey; and then there arrived the invitation of Mr. Davenport, of Wooton, near Ashborne, in the Peak of Derbyshire.

Davenport was a man of means. Wooton was only one of many residences that he possessed. He seldom went there, because it was in a wild part of the country, several miles from the nearest town; but he understood that Jean-Jacques was seeking just such a solitary retreat. It was at his disposition—and the servants were at his service—if he would consent to be his guest. He might pay something if he preferred to do so—a mere nominal sum—say, £30 a year for his own board and lodging and that of his housekeeper.

That was what Jean-Jacques wanted. At any rate, it was what he thought he wanted. The small payment would save his dignity, and the good address would enhance it. The difficulty of catering and marketing in a strange language would be obviated.

He would be master of his movements, and the question whether Thérèse should take her meals in the dining-room or the servants' hall would not arise. The mob would be remote; but pious pilgrims would doubtless find their way to Wooton, as they had found their way to Montmorency and to Motiers. He expected to be quite happy there.

Hume had his doubts, however. After three months of Jean-Jacques' society he was just beginning to know him; and he also knew that the English enthusiasts were not so enthusiastic as to be likely to pursue him fifteen miles from a town. So we find him writing, on March 25, to Dr. Blair:—

"I foresee that he will be unhappy in that situation, as he has indeed been always in all situations. He will be entirely without occupation, without company, and almost without amusement of any kind. . . . He is like a man who were stript, not only of his clothes, but of his skin, and turned out in that situation to combat with the rude and boisterous elements, such as perpetually disturb this lower world. . . . He has frequent and long fits of the spleen, from the state of his mind or body, call it which you please; and from his extreme sensibility of temper, during that disposition, company is a torment to him."

To another correspondent he writes:—

"If it be possible for a man to live without occupation, without books, without society, and without sleep, he will not quit this wild and solitary place; where all the circumstances which he ever

required seem to concur for the purpose of making him happy. But I dread the weakness and inquietude natural to every man, and above all to a man of his character. I should not be surprised that he had soon quitted this retreat."

The diagnosis here is very acute; the prognosis hardly less so. All that was lacking was the recognition that the symptoms described were those of mental disorder. Hume, indeed, failed to recognise them as such, even when they became more pronounced, as they quickly did under the influences of solitude; but we, with all the facts before us, can easily trace the psychological history of the subsequent proceedings.

Jean-Jacques had a grievance. Other interests and occupations had prevented him from making much of it while in London. Left alone at Wooton, he had nothing but his grievance to think about. He nursed it, dwelt on it, tried in his wrong-headed way to get at the bottom of it, scented intrigue and conspiracy, and finally burst out against Hume in a tirade of unimaginable violence, administering, as he put it, a series of "slaps in the face" to his "patron."

The root of the trouble was a forged letter, purporting to be addressed to Jean-Jacques by Frederick the Great, treating the philosopher as a man whose one passion in life was to be persecuted, and offering to persecute him as much as he liked if only he would come to Prussia. The letter was, of course, a practical joke,—a hoax not intended to deceive. Horace Walpole had composed it with the

help of d'Alembert, and circulated it for the entertainment of the Parisians. A translation of it was printed in an English newspaper, for the amusement of the English. It was fair satire of the sort to which our generation has been habituated by the humorists of *Punch*.

Jean-Jacques, however, had no sense of humour, and could not see the fun. He took the incident seriously, and it assumed vast proportions in his darkened mind. He ruminated over it until he saw it as a detail in a complicated scheme for discrediting and undoing him. He jumped, without a shred of evidence, to the conclusion that Hume must be at the bottom of it all. He set himself to unmask the conspiracy of which he could not penetrate the motive. Extorting a sinister meaning from the most trivial incidents, he built up a case against Hume, at once amazingly logical and amazingly fallacious. Hume, in collusion with his enemies, had lured him to England in order to ruin him. Hume had opened his letters and betrayed his secrets. Hume had conspired with Davenport to pay the hire of the post-chaise which took him to Wooton instead of letting him pay it himself. The procuring of the pension was a further example of his malice,—a link in the long chain of treachery, etc., etc.

Nobody except Mrs. Macdonald has ever taken this extraordinary array of charges seriously; and the most that Mrs. Macdonald can make out is that possibly Hume once made a joke from which Horace Walpole took a hint for the letter which caused the disturbance, and may have been too much disposed to treat Jean-Jacques as a child that did not know

what was good for it. Jean-Jacques' general behaviour certainly justified him in doing so; and even if it did not, the offence taken was out of all proportion to the offence given. That was the view unanimously held at the time by those who knew the facts. In Paris even Jean-Jacques' friends felt obliged to range themselves on Hume's side, pleading, at the utmost, that he would make allowances for his unfortunate antagonist. Most of them added, though in a spirit of indignation rather than indulgence, that Jean-Jacques must be mad to comport himself in such a manner. The critic of to-day has no choice but to agree with them. Jean-Jacques' famous letter to Hume is, on the face of it, the lucubration of a monomaniac.

It was a lucubration, however, which called for a reply; and Hume replied.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Hume's candid opinion of Jean Jacques—His published rejoinder—Public opinion on the Quarrel—Jean Jacques' life at Wooton—Reminiscences of his sojourn, collected by William Howitt—Jean-Jacques persuaded that there is a plot against him—Quarrels with Davenport—Leaves Wooton—Writes from Spalding proposing to return—Changes his mind and returns to France.

HUME'S candid opinion of Jean-Jacques is given in several letters to several friends. To Dr. Blair he writes:—

"He is surely the blackest and most atrocious villain, beyond comparison, that now exists in the world, and I am heartily ashamed of anything I ever wrote in his favour. . . . I know not where the miscreant will now retire to in order to hide his head from this infamy."

And to Adam Smith:—

"Pray, is it not a nice problem whether he be not an arrant villain, or an arrant madman, or both? The last is my opinion, but the villain seems to me to predominate in his character."

It was not his wish, however, to make any public reply. He was a gentleman, and did not care to be

mixed up in vulgar brawls. The dispute was too shrill and hysterical for a man of his calm temperament; and the charges might fairly be thought to be refuted by their ridiculous extravagance. What was to be made of a man who saw in the demeanour of landladies a proof of conspiracy among philosophers, who accused his benefactor of revealing his true nature by talking in his sleep, and inferred an intention to ruin and dishonour him from the fact that "Annie Elliott looked very coldly at him as he went by her in the passage?" What rejoinder could be more crushing than a contemptuous silence?

Those were Hume's first thoughts; but he saw, on second thoughts, that there was another side to the question. The story was already public, though it had not been published; the correspondence, though it had not been printed, had been handed round. All Paris was talking about it. "If the King of England," wrote Hume to Madame de Boufflers, "had declared war against the King of France, it could not have been more suddenly the subject of conversation."

Moreover, Jean-Jacques was not only talking, but was also writing. He was known to be writing his Memoirs, and there was reason to believe that his version of the quarrel would be presented in them. He was a plausible special pleader; and Hume's posthumous reputation, if he did not take immediate measures to protect it, would be at the mercy of his enemy's posthumous animosity. He laid these considerations before his friends in both countries, pointing out that "though my case is so clear as not to admit of the least controversy, yet it is only clear to those who know it"; and most of them agreed that it would

be well for him to state his case in a pamphlet. Horace Walpole, indeed, objected on the ground that a literary quarrel was only a storm in a teapot, of no more public concern than a wrangle between country squires about a right of way; but even Horace Walpole came round when he learnt that he, as well as Hume, was the object of really damaging aspersions. So presently there appeared, in both French and English, the *Exposé succinct de la contestation qui s'est élevée entre M. Hume et M. Rousseau, avec les pièces justificatives.* One must not say that the pamphlet is absolutely convincing; but one may say that it has convinced everyone except Mrs. Macdonald.

That the authenticity of the documents quoted might not be impugned, Hume decided to deposit them in a public library. The trustees of the British Museum having declined to receive them—probably from no other motive than a wish to avoid the trouble of exhibiting them to crowds of curious inquirers—they passed into the possession of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The King and Queen, Hume says, sent for them and "read them with avidity"; and Dr. Maty of the British Museum wrote to him:—

"With respect to these papers, give me leave to assure you that I never had any doubts about the merits of the cause. I have long ago fixed my opinion about R—'s character, and think madness is the only excuse that can be offered for his inconsistencies."

As for the opinion of the public on the difference, that perhaps is best summed up in a satirical document, published in some of the newspapers of the day, en-

titled, *Heads of an Indictment laid by J. J. Rousseau, philosopher, against D. Hume, Esq.* A few extracts will show what was its nature, and what most people thought :—

"1. That the said David Hume, to the great scandal of philosophy, and not having the fitness of things before his eyes, did concert a plan with Messrs. Tronchin, Voltaire, and d'Alembert, to ruin the said J. J. Rousseau for ever, by bringing him over to England, and there settling him to his heart's content.

"2. That the said David Hume did, with a malicious and traitorous intent, procure, or cause to be procured, by himself, or somebody else, one pension of the yearly value of £100 or thereabouts, to be paid to the said J. J. Rousseau, on account of his being a philosopher, privately or publicly, as to him the said J. J. Rousseau should seem fit.

"7. That the said David Hume did most atrociously and flagitiously put him, the said J. J. Rousseau, philosopher, into a passion; as knowing that then he would be guilty of a number of absurdities.

"8. That the said David Hume must have published Mr. Walpole's letter in the newspapers, because, at that time, there was neither man, woman, nor child in the island of Great Britain, but the said David Hume, the said J. J. Rousseau, and the printers of the several newspapers aforesaid.

"11. That the said David Hume did, at the instigation of the devil, in a most wicked and unnatural manner, send, or cause to be sent, to the lodgings of him, the said J. J. Rousseau, one dish of beef-steaks, thereby meaning to insinuate that he, the said J. J.

Rousseau, was a beggar, and came over to England to ask alms."

And so forth, the heads of the indictment being twelve in number, all presented in the same facetious tone, yet summarising rather than parodying the splenetic original.

The quarrel, however, after being something more than a nine days' wonder, gradually flickered out. In spite of the provocation, Hume bore little, if any malice, and even used such influence as he had to save Jean-Jacques from arrest on his return to France; while Jean-Jacques, on his part, did not pursue the controversy further. "I have nothing to say to Mr. Hume," he wrote, "except that I think him very insolent for a good man and very noisy for a philosopher." Evidently, therefore, he perused the pamphlet in a comparatively lucid interval, though it is not less evident that he was mad on the whole, and even continued to get madder.

To casual acquaintances, no doubt, he seemed to be sane though eccentric,—which very likely was what the provincial gentry, as well as the Derbyshire peasantry, expected from a philosopher who was also a foreigner. He was on visiting terms with a few of the country families—especially with Mr. Bernard Granville of Calwich. The Duchess of Portland met him there and went botanising with him. Lady Kildare wanted him to be her children's tutor. A Miss Dewes insisted upon prescribing for his ailments. Dr. Erasmus Darwin waylaid him on one of his walks, and managed to get into conversation with him about the flora of the Peak. These few facts, constituting

almost all that is known of the social side of his life at Wooton, have been collected and set forth by Professor Churton Collins;[1] and the few traditions of his sojourn which still lingered in 1840 were gathered up by William Howitt and published in his *Visits to Remarkable places*. There were still, at that date, some "oldest inhabitants" who remembered him by the name of "Ross Hall," and the traveller questioned some of them about him.

"This old man," he writes, "as well as Farmer Burton and Mrs. Salt, described him as walking out almost every day, and coming back with great handfuls of plants. They described him, exactly as he describes himself, in his Armenian dress, only they called his striped caftan a plaid. Mademoiselle le Vasseur they all called Madam Zell; and Mrs. Salt said how much afraid she and her brother, children of about ten years old, used to be when they met him in the lanes on their way to school. His long gown and belt, and his black velvet cap with its gold tassels and pendent top, made him a most awful figure to them, especially as they used to see him poring on the park wall for moss, or groping in some lonely nook after plants. As he could not address them in English to dissipate their fears, they used to run off, if possible, at the very first glimpse of the terrible outlandish man.

"They all agreed in saying that both Ross Hall and Madam Zell were very good folks—very kind to the poor; and one of them mentioned a fact which, as the villagers actually knew nothing of Rousseau's

[1] In *Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in England* (Eveleigh Nash).

history, is very characteristic. "The old man, who used to remain at the house during the absence of the family in town, one day beat his wife, the housekeeper; and Madam Zell, on some of the villagers flocking in at the outcry, in a state of great excitement, said in her few words of English to some young women, 'Never marry! never marry! You see! you see!'

"Old Farmer Burton said 'it was thought he was some king who had been driven from his dominions.'"

That is practically all that is known of the external circumstances of Jean-Jacques' life at Wooton. The Davenport family, according to Howitt, preferred the incident of his stay to be forgotten. The Reverend Walter Davenport Bromley, of whom he made inquiries, told him that "his father, having been educated on Rousseau's system, and feeling the deficiencies of it, never liked to hear him mentioned." Our information can, therefore, only be supplemented from the Correspondence; and the impression left on the mind by the perusal of the letters is that of a man whose mind is hopelessly clouded by insane suspicions. He repeats, again and again, that Voltaire, Hume, and d'Alembert have contrived a plot against him. "I cannot penetrate their motive," he writes to Du Peyrou, "but a motive they must have." He quarrels with all those of his friends who are also friends of Hume—with the Lord Marshal, who does not write to him often enough; with Madame de Boufflers, who remonstrates with him on his letter to Hume, telling him that all his supporters are "thrown into consternation and reduced to silence" by his

conduct; with Madame de Luxembourg, for reasons which it is hopeless to try to understand. He even declares that Erasmus Darwin's conversation with him on botanical subjects is "part of a preconcerted plan." It is all very preposterous, but it is also very pitiful.

Finally, of course, as was inevitable, he quarrelled with his host.

The quarrel is another of those in which it is idle to look for the rights of the case. Jean-Jacques' conflict was with phantoms conjured up by his own diseased imagination, and in every petty annoyance he saw a symptom of some deep design against his peace. There was trouble, at the nature of which we can only guess, between Thérèse and Davenport's servants. There was a difference of opinion, of which the details are wrapped in mystery, between Thérèse and the housekeeper about a kettle and some cinders. "English domestic servants," Jean-Jacques declared, were worse than "the devils in hell." He suspected wheels within wheels, and concluded that the impertinences of cooks and housemaids were a part of the same preconcerted plan as Erasmus Darwin's interest in his botanical researches. He wrote to Davenport demanding "explanations"; and when Davenport delayed his answer—presumably because he could not make out what on earth it was that he was invited to explain—he lost his temper about that, and once more took his pen and wrote furiously, insisting that there was some "mystery" which it behoved Davenport to clear up without loss of time.

Davenport humoured him, answering gently and diplomatically, and there was peace for a season. Early in 1767, however, Jean-Jacques' suspicions,

temporarily lulled, were reawakened. Some of his letters were delivered by mistake to his cousin, F. H. Rousseau, in Paris. He jumped to the conclusion that his cousin was the *âme damnée* of Hume. A scheme was on foot; a "snare" had been laid for him. His enemies were preparing to open all his correspondence and steal all his manuscripts. Spies were watching him, and he doubted whether he would be able to get away in safety. A friend must come in person to the rescue. He appeals to Du Peyrou to send some one, and concludes: "Oh, my friend, pray for me! I do not deserve the misfortunes with which I am overwhelmed."

The fear of being kidnapped seized him—not for the first time. He had felt the same apprehension when botanising with Lord Bute in the Thames valley. A river party on that occasion, landing on the bank to lunch, frightened him out of his wits. To the amazement of his companion, he took to his heels and ran. The terror was now no momentary aberration, but a fixed idea; and on April 30 he sat down and wrote Davenport the most extraordinary letter in the whole of his published correspondence.

Strange things, he said, had been going on in the house since Christmas. Davenport ought to have known about them. Perhaps he had known and had purposely refrained from interfering. In that case his conduct was still more reprehensible. In any case, Davenport had shown himself indifferent to his guest's comfort, and therefore he has made up his mind to go. He knows that snares await him, and that all his precautions against them will be in vain. But no matter. He knows how to "conclude an honourable

career with courage"; he can be crushed, but he will not be degraded. And so farewell! He is sincerely grateful for noble hospitality. His one regret is that his host did not become his friend.

Having written that, he disappeared, leaving the luggage behind as usual, but taking Thérèse with him for once. For several days no one knew what had become of him. "After all my inquiries," wrote Davenport to Hume, "I can't, for the life of me, find out to what part my wild philosopher is fled. . . . They scarce took anything along with them but what they carried on their backs." On the 17th of May, however, he learnt from "a most melancholy letter" that Jean-Jacques had, somehow or other, got to Spalding in Lincolnshire, felt that he had leapt from the frying-pan to the fire, and was anxious to return to Wooton :—

"I would rather be free" (he wrote) "than an inmate in your house; that is a pardonable preference. But I would rather live in your house than be a prisoner somewhere else; and I would rather be a prisoner anywhere than where I am, for this place is horrible, and whatever happens I cannot remain here. If you are willing to receive me, I am ready to return. . . . If my proposition is acceptable to you, will you please send me word to that effect by some trustworthy person?"

Davenport instantly dispatched a servant to Spalding, only to learn that Jean-Jacques had started for Dover four days before the man arrived.

No one had really done anything to alarm him;

no one had treated him otherwise than kindly; but his own fears hunted him tirelessly, and had at last reduced him to a state of abject terror. He trembled, not only for his liberty but for his life; and he wrote both to the Lord Chancellor and to General Conway to say so. There is a plot against him, he reiterates. He will promise anything if only he may be helped to escape. He will undertake not to write his Memoirs, never to breathe a word of the treatment he has received in England, and never to speak of Mr. Hume except in complimentary terms. But he must be protected. It will not be very safe for his enemies to procure his assassination. He is too well known a man to disappear mysteriously; he will be missed, and questions will be asked. Only he does not feel safe. Protection is really necessary. May he not—at his own expense—be accorded an escort of cavalry?

So he wrote; and the answer was, of course, that he needed no escort other than that of a postboy. He pushed on alone, therefore, with none but postboys to protect him, galloping for his life, as if armed pursuers were indeed upon his track, covering the whole distance between Spalding and Dover in a couple of days. At Dover he found the sea raging so that he could not start. This, it seemed to him, was yet another incident in the great plot for his downfall and dishonour. He climbed—a stark, raving maniac—on to a pedestal from which he could address the populace, and denounced the machinations of his foes in a language which none of his hearers understood.

That was his last exploit on English soil. Pre-

sently the wind fell; and on May 22 we find him at Calais, writing to the Marquis de Mirabeau and others to say that he has passed through "queer adventures," considering whose hospitality he will next accept, and whither he had best repair to end his days in peace.

CHAPTER XXXV

Jean Jacques' madness—Was it due to gout?—The guest of Mirabeau at Fleury—And of the Prince de Conti at Trye—Trouble with the servants—And with the neighbours—Sudden departure—Travels to Lyons—And to Grenoble—Excursion to the Grande Chartreuse—Settles at Bourgoin—Goes through a ceremony of marriage with Thérèse.

In later years Jean-Jacques attributed his vagaries in England to the climate; and very possibly he was right. He was gouty as well as neurotic; and the damp and the fogs of England, though they do not drive men mad, do at least make their gout, if gout be their ailment, worse; while English food and English cooking have a similar tendency. And though gout, however bad, does not necessarily induce insanity, it imparts a colour of its own to any insanity that exists. The gouty are specially apt to be suspicious of mysteries and black intrigues, and to imagine that foul conspirators are working against them in the dark. When the gout leaves them, the suspicions vanish too.

That seems to be what happened to Jean-Jacques. If we assume that he was gouty while at Wooton, and that the pains quitted him in the drier air of France, we shall have a credible explanation of his apparent return to sanity at Calais. He was still neurotic. We may even put it more bluntly and say that he was still mad. But his madness was no longer, for a season, the suspicious insanity of the gouty.

His mind was no longer clouded with a doubt as to the intentions of his best friends. He left Hume, and Walpole, and Voltaire, and d'Alembert alone. He wrote sane letters, and looked round serenely for a fresh host and a fresh place of refuge.

The next few years of his life were years of wandering. They are years over which his biographers, with one accord, pass lightly; and there is no good reason why a fresh biographer should dwell on them. It was a period in which he wrote nothing and in which nothing happened—of which, consequently, there is little to record except the dates of his successive migrations and the recurring, though not continuous, evidences of an unbalanced intellect.

While he was in England, Count Orloff had offered him a retreat on one of his estates in Russia. That invitation he had wisely declined with thanks, on the ground that he was too old, too ill, and too much in need of sunshine. From Calais he wrote that he had resolved to seek repose at Venice, but that, as the journey was long, he must proceed by short stages, and would like to spend a few days in Paris, incognito, and see his friends. The Marquis de Mirabeau, the "friend of men" and the father of the more famous Mirabeau, with whom he had lately been in correspondence, offered him a house at Fleury-sous-Meudon, just outside the capital, and he went there. That was the first stage, and our glimpse of it may be taken from a letter in which Hume repeats Horace Walpole's gossip:—

"Though Rousseau is settled . . . within a league of Paris, nobody inquires after him, nobody visits him,

nobody talks of him; every one has agreed to neglect and disregard him: a more sudden revolution of fortune than almost ever happened to any man—at least to any man of letters."

There is malice there, on Walpole's part if not on Hume's; and the suggestion that Jean-Jacques was once more disappointed because he was not conspicuous seems unfair. He was a man awakened from a nightmare and ashamed of his hallucinations. He had made a fool of himself, and he knew it, and wanted to hide his head while he recovered. It was precisely because Mirabeau would not leave him in peace that he quitted Fleury. The friend of men had theories of his own on political economy, and wanted Jean-Jacques to go pamphleteering on his behalf. Jean-Jacques told him that he could not be bothered with political economy, that he meant to publish nothing more before his death; and as for reading:—

"I propose henceforward to read nothing which might reawaken my dormant ideas—not even your books. From this time forward I am dead to all literature whatsoever. Nothing will alter my determination on this point. My gratitude to you is profound; but it does not go so far as to make me able or willing to rouse myself from my intellectual coma."

Their tempers being thus incompatible, the sooner they parted the better; and Jean-Jacques managed, for once in his life, to say good-bye to a benefactor

without turning and rending him. The correspondence continued for some time, and continued to be amicable, though Jean-Jacques moved on. The Prince de Conti had placed his country seat at Trye at his disposal, and assured him of his protection. He changed his name—a favourite proceeding with him almost from his youth. He had called himself Vaussore de Villeneuve while teaching music at Lausanne, and Dudding while making love to Madame de Larnage on the road to Montpellier; and now at Trye he called himself Renou. Settling at Trye some time in June 1767, he remained for about a year. That is the second stage—the stage at which suspicions revive and the symptoms of insanity reappear.

What happened at Trye to trouble his composure is uncertain. No definite allegation of importance can be extracted from his letters. Probably, therefore, nothing whatever happened except that the gout returned and that Thérèse quarrelled with the servants. It was her habit to quarrel, not only with English domestic servants but with all domestic servants everywhere; and it must, of course, be admitted that her position was difficult, and that the pampered menials of a Prince of the Blood were more than likely to be impertinent to her. Our evidence on that point, however, is derived not from Jean-Jacques but from Hume's correspondents. From Jean-Jacques himself we only gather that once more, for some mysterious reason, every man's hand is against him and all the spies of all his foes are on his track. He takes Mirabeau for his confidant:—

"You ask me to give you an account of my life here. No, no, my respectable friend; I will not wound your heart with such a tale. The treatment which I have experienced in this country from all the inhabitants without exception, from the very instant of my arrival among them, is too contrary to the character of the nation and the intentions of the Prince who has accorded me this shelter to be attributed to anything but an access of madness the reason of which I am unwilling even to inquire."

In a letter written a little later to Du Peyrou, he goes into more detail. He has no doubt, he says, that the Prince and Madame de Luxembourg wish to do their best for him; but that has not sufficed. "All the Prince's household, all the priests, all the peasants, all the neighbours" are up in arms against him. The nature of their demonstrations is not explained; but in a subsequent letter some at least of the grievances are particularised. Jean-Jacques' botanical researches, it appears, have been treated with contempt. A botanist is ranked by the people of Gisors not with men of science but with apothecaries; it is the belief of the peasants that the philosopher passes his time in compounding purgative pills. Nor is that all. Though he is living in the midst of gardens and orchards, the gardeners are in a conspiracy to prevent him from procuring fruit and vegetables. He has complained of this to the Prince, who spent a few days at Trye while hunting, and the Prince has sent him a dish of fruit from his own table. But still "I am like Tantalus in the midst of the waters, and my position is awful from every point of view."

Du Peyrou has advised him to seek consolation in botany in spite of the jeers of his neighbours, but he cannot :—

"The people in whose power I am do not even leave me this resource. They wait for me as I walk along the roads; they spare no pains to drive me from this place, and they mean to succeed in their object, if not by one means, then by another. One of their most cunning devices has been to set the inhabitants of adjacent villages against me. The road passing through the court and the terrace was lately closed. Though the closing of it is a great inconvenience to me personally, they have managed to circulate the report, through the gamekeepers, that it is 'the gentleman up at the castle' who insists upon thus depriving the peasants of their right of way. I perceived the consequences of this report on the two last occasions on which I went out, and I am not tempted to repeat the experience. . . . So you see, my dear friend, I am helpless in the hands of my persecutors."

That is how he saw the situation; but other people saw it differently. "That dog of a Diogenes," wrote d'Alembert, "is at Trye. They tell me that he tyrannises over the country people, and has them imprisoned or locked up whenever he has anything to complain of—and you know how little it takes to start him complaining." The case is evidently one in which the verdict depends upon the point of view; all that is clear is that Jean-Jacques and his neighbours reciprocated one another's unneighbourly

feelings; and that he, having submitted to his annoyances for three months longer, suddenly took his leave of the Prince de Conti in another of those letters which only a madman could have written:—

"My Lord,—The members of your household—I except no one—are quite incapable of understanding me. . . . They have spared no pains—and will spare none—each employing the manœuvres which he thinks most appropriate, to make me appear an object of universal detestation and contempt, and to compel me to leave your house. . . . My heart and my life are at your service, but my honour is my own. Permit me to obey its call and go away to-morrow. I venture to say that you owe it to me to do so. You really must not allow a rascal such as I am to live among these honourable men."

He departed as promptly as he announced, leaving Thérèse behind, as was his habit. We find him a few days later at Lyons, and then at Grenoble, planning an excursion to Chambéry, to visit the grave of Madame de Warens, but still pursued by phantom persecutors. "Since I left Trye," he writes to Thérèse, "I have daily acquired more and more certain proof that the vigilant eye of malevolence never quits me for an instant, and is especially on the look out for me at the frontier." He doubts, he tells her, whether he will return alive from his expedition, and he directs her how to act in the event of his disappearance. He cannot advise her to enter a convent. Not in the cloister does one find liberty and peace of mind. Let her, rather, take a lodging

at Lyons, near Madame Boy de la Tour and
daughter, and hold his memory dear.

It is not quite clear whether he accomplished
journey of which he spoke or not. Lord Morley t
that he did not; M. Mugnier says that he did.
went, at any rate, to the Grande Chartreuse, but
returned to Grenoble, hunted and haunted, as
by the fear of malevolent manœuvres which he
not particularise and of which his biographer
in vain to discover even the faintest trace. "D
imagine," he writes to a friend in the same
"that I am still so mad as to expect to find a p
able asylum where I shall be protected from
snares and from insults and affronts." "The m
of mankind," he proceeds, has deprived him of
charms of repose and the amusements of bot
His enemies lay their ambush for him wherever
hear that it is his purpose to reside. The only c
open to him is to wander from place to place
then, when he has spent all his money, to be
bread from door to door. Meanwhile, however, h
settle at Bourgoin, and lodge at the Fontaine d'

He did so, and the residence at Bourgoin
the third stage of his peregrinations. Thérèse j
him there, and the next thing that he did was
through a ceremony of marriage with her. "I
had for a few days," he writes to a M. Lallia
August 31, "the pleasure of the society o
companion of my misfortunes. Seeing that sh
resolved at all costs to follow my destiny, I have
measures to enable her to follow it with honou
seems to me that I took no risks in rendering
soluble an attachment which has endured for five

twenty years, and which mutual esteem, without which no friendship can be lasting, has continually increased."

That is his own account of the transaction. Paris heard of it and passed its comments. "A fine conclusion to a sordid romance," was the observation of d'Alembert. "Why he has married her now, and why he didn't marry her before," wrote Madame de Boufflers to Hume, "is more than I can tell you." They would have been able to add, if they had been present at the wedding, that it was not a wedding at all in any proper sense of the word, but merely a fantastic parody of the marriage ceremony, meaningless in the eyes of the Church and invalid in the eyes of the law. A "solemn engagement" is Jean-Jacques' description of it, "contracted in all the simplicity, but also in all the truth, of nature, in the presence of two honourable and worthy men"; and the Memoirs of one of the two honourable and worthy men in question contain a picture of the ritual :—

"On the 29th of August," writes Champagneux, "he invited me to dine with him on the following day, and he gave the same invitation to my cousin, M. de Rosière. We arrived a little before our time. Rousseau was better dressed than usual : Mlle Renou had also given more attention than usual to her toilette. Rousseau led us both into an inner apartment, and there begged us to witness the most important act of his life. Then, taking Mlle Renou's hand, he spoke of the affection which had subsisted between them for five-and-twenty years, and of his determination to make the alliance indissoluble by tying the conjugal knot. He asked Mlle Renou whether she shared

his sentiments, and when she murmured 'yes,' with transports of tenderness, Rousseau, still holding her hand in his, pronounced a discourse in which he drew a touching picture of the marriage tie, dwelling on various incidents of his life, and gave his sentiments such an absorbing interest that Mlle Renou, my cousin, and myself dissolved in tears, evoked by the divers sentiments which his warm eloquence inspired in us. Then, rising to heavenly heights, he spoke in language so exalted that we could no longer follow him; but presently, realising to what sublime heights he had attained, he came down to earth again. He called us to bear witness to the oath which he swore always to be the husband of Mlle Renou, and begging us never to forget it. His mistress reciprocated his vows, and they embraced. A profound silence succeeded this melting scene. We passed from the marriage ceremony to the wedding breakfast. Not a cloud was on the bridegroom's brow. He was gay all through the repast, and at dessert he sang two couplets which he had composed for the occasion."

One would have said—his friends doubtless thought—that he had escaped from his hallucinations and had, at the eleventh hour, found happiness in love. It may be that he himself thought so; it may even be that, for a season, he actually was happy. But the respite, if respite he did enjoy, was brief. The clouds were soon to gather again; and the *lune de miel*, so long and so strangely postponed, was to be followed, after a very short interval, by a *lune rousse*.

CHAPTER XXXVI

t Bourgoin And at Monquin Quarrel with Thévenin the rrier— Quarrel with Thérèse Reconciliation with Thérèse— ean-Jacques broods over the intrigues of his enemies— elieves that he has at last penetrated their motives— Decides return to Paris and clear his reputation by reading his *onfessions* aloud.

first blow at Jean-Jacques' tranquillity at Bourgoin struck by Thévenin, the furrier. There must be ast thirty letters—most of them long letters—in Jean-Jacques calls friends and acquaintances strangers and Europe generally to witness that is not a word of truth in the allegation that he Thévenin the furrier nine francs.

Thévenin, it must be admitted, had no just claim im. It was a case of mistaken identity. The Rousseau is almost as common in France as ame Johnson in England, the name Macdonald cotland, or the name Williams in Wales; and enin's creditor was not Jean-Jacques, but some and quite different Rousseau. Or it may have some impostor who had pretended to be Jean- ues in order to borrow nine francs on the security great philosophic reputation. The claim, at any was instantly withdrawn when claimant and dant met. This is Jean-Jacques' friend Servan's nt of their interview :—

"Rousseau hurries from Bourgoin to Grenoble and confronts the man, together with Thérèse, in the presence of several respectable witnesses. What happened then was what we had all expected to happen. The furrier failed to recognise in Rousseau of Grenoble the Rousseau whom he had met at Verrières. We all laughed at the mistake. The real Rousseau, as it seems to me, might very well have joined in the laugh without compromising himself, and that should have been the end of the matter. But not at all. The citizen of Geneva never minded making a fuss about his private affairs, and he made one now. It was his evident intention that this soap-bubble should burst like a bomb-shell."

Instead, therefore, of accepting the excuses offered, he called the world to witness to his integrity. Where could he flee, he asked the Comte de Tonnerre, to escape from impostors, and from the lies and calumnies that pursued him? Then he wrote to the French Minister of Finance to expose the attempted fraud, and to lay before him evidence which he had collected as to Thévenin's past conduct and character. Receiving no answer to his letter, he begged a friend to call upon the Minister, submit the circumstances of the case to him in a personal interview, and inquire whether Thévenin had not been previously convicted of similar attempts to obtain money by false pretences. And so forth, and so forth, and all about a claim for nine francs which had been preferred in error and withdrawn as soon as the error was recognised. The incident is quite devoid of importance in itself; but the raging of the storm

e tea-cup is eloquent evidence of Jean-Jacques' al condition.

The storm subsided, and he moved to a farmhouse onquin, on the hills above Bourgoin. There we him suffering from a complaint which may have only indigestion, but was more probably gastric rh; the principal symptom being an inability to and grub about for plants without great physical mfort. Then, on the top of that unpleasantness, was trouble with Thérèse who, after a liaison h had lasted five-and-twenty years, suddenly nded a separation—a banal anticlimax, it must lmitted, to the weird marriage ceremony described e last chapter.

The grounds of her discontent are nowhere pre- y formulated, but may be inferred from Jean- ues' reply to her complaints. He can only love he protests, as a brother. The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak, and his health, in spite er *agaceries*, forbids him to do more. One d be more certain, however, that this deprivation tituted the sole grievance, if one did not know certain passages in the *Confessions* that the ivation was no new thing, but had already lasted een years.

t is not, one knows, a deprivation to which Thérèse ever completely reconciled even by the calming ence of advancing years. She was well over fifty n she finally betrayed the philosopher in the arms stable boy. Still this sudden assertion of rights ong left in abeyance hardly seems by itself, in circumstances, an adequate explanation of the rel; and Thérèse had, as a matter of fact, another

grievance. At Montmorency, it will be remembered, Jean-Jacques made a glossary of her uncouth perversions of the French language "for the amusement of Madame de Luxembourg." Other chroniclers relate that, at Bourgoin and Grenoble, he laughed at her ignorance in her presence at the dinner-tables of his friends. It is another of our many proofs that no experience could ever teach him to behave quite like a gentleman; and one can understand that the misplaced merriment combined with the deprivations to make his mistress angry.

His letter, however, reconciled her. It was a very humble letter, very affectionate and devoted, full of proper solicitude for her future, full of minute advice as to the course to be pursued. Her annuity will continue to be paid to her through M. Du Peyrou. As for the arrangements for her removal from Dauphiné, she had better "apply to M. de Saint-Germain and try to put up with his wife's disdainful airs, knowing that you do not deserve such treatment." Her wisest plan will be to get her to a nunnery, but that, after all, is as she likes. Et cetera, et cetera. The appeal brought her back,—perhaps her intention of going had never been very seriously entertained,—and so that second storm blew by, and Jean-Jacques, left without any clear case against any one in particular, once more turned the battery of his suspicions against the world at large.

His reception at Grenoble ought really to have disarmed suspicion. The populace serenaded him with *Le devin du village*, and applauded him when he showed himself at the window. Gaspard Bovier, the advocate, to whom he brought a letter of introduc-

tion, invited him to stay in his house. The tradespeople insisted upon giving him credit. But all in vain. He clamoured that the offer of credit was a device for imposing charity on him against his will. He declined Bovier's invitation, declaring that he would rather go out and eat grass in the fields; and Bovier had to go round the town and look for lodgings for him in the rain at nine o'clock at night. Asked to dinner by Bovier, a few days later he came, but rose from the table and beat a precipitate retreat before the meal was finished because he had heard the bell ring and suspected that he was about to be exhibited as an object of curiosity to strangers. That was the mood in which he went to Bourgoin, and in that mood he continued there; his mind naturally dwelling upon the plot which he believed his enemies to have contrived. "The more I look into the matter," he wrote, "the greater my certainty that some mischief is brewing, though I cannot make out exactly what it is."

Presently, however, he persuaded himself that he had, at last, divined the true character of the intrigue. No less a person, he declared, than the Duc de Choiseul, Foreign Minister of France, was at the bottom of it. Long ago, while living at Montmorency, he had offended the Duc de Choiseul—by praising him. The Duc de Choiseul had taken offence because he knew, only too well, that the praise was undeserved. It was ironical, he thought, and a veiled insult lay beneath it: "That is the origin of his hatred of me, and of my misfortunes." As for his methods:—

"To satisfy his desire for vengeance, he sought neither my death, which would have put an end to my

sufferings, nor my captivity, which would at least have given me repose. He perceived that the worst torture which could be inflicted upon a proud and ambitious man was opprobrium and contempt, and that I dreaded nothing more than to find myself the object of hatred; and he framed his plans on that assumption. The object of his life has been to represent me as a monster. He has secretly contrived the defamation of my character. He has environed me with his satellites, and caused them to drag me through the mire; he has made me the sport and laughing-stock of the vulgar."

And all this with devilish cunning, causing cruelty to be disguised as kindness, so that Jean-Jacques may look like a curmudgeon if he complains, and stirring up all his friends to secret enmity. He has had many friends, and they have nearly all been taught to hate him, and in no case has their hatred any substantial cause. Diderot hates him because he has loved him too well. Madame de Boufflers hates him because he has criticised her literary compositions too candidly, and because she made amorous advances which he rejected. Madame de Luxembourg hates him because of his awkwardness in social intercourse. Dr. Tronchin hates him as a fellow-citizen, envious of his fame. Baron d'Holbach and his group hate him because of the social distinction which they have seen him achieve at Montmorency. Hume's motives are not so clear, but he has allowed the "league" to employ him as their instrument: "I fell. I let Hume get hold of me, and started with him for England, where they had so long been looking out for

From that moment onward they have had me in
r grip, from which I shall never escape."
Nor is that all. The French have not wasted
r time. The sixteen months of his absence in
gland gave them their opportunity of stirring up
nch feeling against him, and they availed them-
es of it to the full. His reception, on his return,
not such as he had a right to expect; and even
foreign policy of the country has been directed
a special view to his annoyance. The "ridicu-
and iniquitous expedition to Corsica" was
ceived and executed for this mean and paltry
ose. He, Jean-Jacques, had taken Corsica
er his patronage and protection, and M. de
iseul forthwith set out to conquer Corsica. He
ew what was the blow that would cause my heart
greatest agony, and he did not spare me."
With more — with much more — to the same effect.
"the details included in the execution of the
against me are immense and inconceivable";
the letter unmasking the intrigue is as long as
ng article in the *Edinburgh Review*. It is a mad
r — mad, without qualification, from the first line
e last; and yet there is method in the madness.
Jean-Jacques also has his plan. "I owe the
ainder of my life to the honour of my memory,"
writes to M. de Saint-Germain; and he has
ght out a means whereby his memory may be
guarded. His *Confessions*, begun at Motiers,
continued at Wooton and Trye, were now com-
ed. He would go to Paris and read the *Con-
ons* aloud "in order to expose and disconcert
great conspiracy."

One must not think of him, therefore, as drifting back to Paris because he was tired (or because Thérèse was tired) of the country; nor must we picture him fleeing from Bourgoin, as some biographers have done, to escape from bucolic persecution. He may, no doubt, have had some such collateral motives. Thérèse was never happy in the country, and generally managed to involve him in disagreements with his neighbours. He himself, when in the country, complained, sometimes that he received too much attention, and sometimes that he received too little. There is a well-accredited story to the effect that, once, when he had announced his intention of going out on the hills to botanise, he sulked all day because no curious and admiring crowd assembled to watch and follow him. Little disappointments of that kind may well have helped to make him restless; but the fact remains that his chief purpose in returning to Paris was to clear his reputation by reading his *Confessions* aloud.

Saint-Germain tried to dissuade him. "Why," he asked, "sacrifice your time to your enemies? If your reputation is attacked, it is not your place to defend it. That task appertains to the honourable men who are acquainted with you and with your works. They, few though they be, will be able to silence your foes without your help. As for yourself, if you employ your talents in such a way, you will compromise the honour that you have already won."

Excellent advice, indeed—unimpeachably sound if Saint-Germain was acquainted with the contents of the work designed to justify the ways of Jean-Jacques to men, and very sagacious if he only

guessed at them. But Jean-Jacques was not asking his friend's advice, and had no idea of taking it. He had made up his mind to "place his reputation as a deposit in the hearts of virtuous and honourable men," believing that his "vile accusers" would be put to confusion if he read the *Confessions* aloud, and could not be put to confusion by any other means. Assured of that, he packed up his manuscripts and departed.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Back in Paris—Jean-Jacques abandons Armenian apparel—Relations with the Prince de Ligne—The reading of the *Confessions*—Their reception is discouraging—Madame d'Epinay appeals to the police to interfere.

It was in July 1770, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, that Jean-Jacques returned to Paris, where he was to remain until within a few months of the end. His books brought him in a small revenue, nearly sufficient for his needs, which he could supplement by copying music. This has struck many commentators as an absurd occupation for a man of his genius; but it may have had its utility as a sedative, like the making of laces, and the game of cup-and-ball, and so have given the life of the "self-torturing sophist" the outward semblance—and perhaps also something of the inward reality—of calm.

He, furthermore, for what reason one knows not, now abandoned the trailing garments of the Orient, and bought himself an ordinary, unconspicuous suit of clothes. Perhaps Thérèse insisted. Perhaps the abatement of his malady—we know that it did cease to trouble him during the latter period of his life—prompted him to return to normal clothes. Perhaps his motives were more subtle, and he feared lest the eccentricities of his attire should give a handle to the enemies whom it was his purpose to confound,

and wished to put it out of their power to answer his arguments with gibes at his apparel. Whatever his reasons—and they hardly matter—he resumed his place in Paris as a Parisian whose personal appearance invited no remark.

Grimm gives us a glimpse at him, writing on July 15, 1770:—

"He goes out a good deal, and is to be seen at the houses of fashionable ladies. He sups sometimes too with Sophie Arnould,[1] and an elegant company of *petit-maîtres* and *talons rouges*. Rulhière[2] is the guide who takes him about. A good many inquisitive people have been to call on him—among others, the Prince de Ligne."

The Prince de Ligne has himself recorded in his Memoirs how he called and how he was received. He climbed the stairs of the recluse with the effrontery of youth, pretending to have made a mistake, and asking for "M. Rousseau of Toulouse," the founder of the *Journal Encyclopédique*. "I am only Rousseau of Geneva," was the reply. "Ah, the great botanist!" the flatterer proceeded; and Jean-Jacques was inveigled into showing him his botanical library and his collection of dried plants; and then the conversation turned on the copying of music, and shifted to the malice of mankind and the unconscionable behaviour of David Hume.

[1] The celebrated actress, famous also for her mordant wit.

[2] An author and also a diplomatist, who had been secretary to M. de Breteuil, French Ambassador to Stockholm.

"His ugly old wife, or servant," (the Prince proceeds) "interrupted us, from time to time, with silly questions about his soup and his underclothing; but he answered her with a gentleness of speech which would have ennobled a piece of cheese if that had been the subject of his talk. I could not see that he distrusted me the least in the world. . . . After a silence of veneration, all the while looking the author of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* straight in the face, I withdrew from his garret, the abode of rats, but nevertheless the sanctuary of genius. He rose, escorted me to the door with a show of interest, and never asked my name."

They were to meet again, however. The Prince wrote Jean-Jacques a letter, which Jean-Jacques published, though it was not intended for publication; and Jean-Jacques then returned his call. "I could not believe my eyes," writes the Prince. "Louis XIV. could not have felt a livelier vanity when he received the ambassador of the King of Siam." He implored his visitor to be happy in spite of himself, and to come and live in a Temple of Virtue which he offered to build for his use in his own tiny Principality at Bel-Oeil, where he would find "neither parliament nor clergy, but the best sheep in the world." But Jean-Jacques declined. As usual he suspected ulterior and sinister motives; and the Prince, upon reflection, felt relieved: "For, if he had accepted the offer, he would doubtless have brought discord into my sovereignty, if not among my subjects, at least among my sheep, which he would assuredly have declared to be wolves." So they parted, Jean-

Jacques convinced that the Prince who had seemed so gracious was the tool of his enemies after all, the Prince, on his part, persuaded that Jean-Jacques would rather be persecuted than ignored; and the upshot of the acquaintance was that, when the Prince de Ligne went back to Bel-Œil, and filled a gallery there with the busts of philosophers, he placed the bust of Jean-Jacques outside the door, as an indication that he thought him unworthy of admission to such illustrious company.

That, however, was long afterwards. Jean-Jacques, in the meantime, was engaged with the great task of rehabilitating his reputation, and silencing the tongue of slander, by reading his *Confessions* aloud.

There could be no stronger proof of the interest which his personality still commanded than the fact that he found a willing, and even an eager, audience in the conditions which he imposed. He did not read the early books which posterity esteems the best,—the books which relate his memories of the glory and the dream of youth, the years of the odyssey and the idylls. In those books he had talked, as it were, to himself, remembered what he liked to remember, and tortured the truth, and twisted the facts, with an eye to his own rather than the world's good opinion. The world could wait until after his death for his sentimental calumnies on Madame de Warens. It was his life in Paris, at the Hermitage, at Montmorency, and at Motiers that he was in haste to vindicate; and he began with Book VII.—the book which describes his arrival in the capital in 1741, with fifteen louis in his pocket; and he read from dawn till dusk—for

seventeen hours according to some of his listeners—with only two brief intervals for refreshments.

Four accounts of the readings have been preserved. We may quote the oldest of them, written out by Dorat,[1] one of the few friends who remained faithful to Jean-Jacques until the end, in the form of a letter to a lady, and printed, eight years later, in the *Journal de Paris* :—

"Madame," Dorat begins, "it is now three hours after midnight. I have just gone home, intoxicated with delight and admiration. I expected the reading to last eight hours. It lasted fourteen or fifteen.[2] We assembled at nine[3] o'clock in the morning, and our party has only just broken up, without any interval in the entertainment except for a brief rest which, brief though it was, seemed all too long to us. It was his Autobiography that Rousseau read to us. What a work it is! How well he depicts himself, and what a pleasure one feels in recognising the portrait! He acknowledged his merits in it with a noble pride, and admits his faults with a still more noble frankness. He brought tears to our eyes by the pathetic picture which he drew of his sufferings and his weaknesses, of the trust which he reposed in his friends and the ingratitude with which they paid him for his confidences, of all the storms that have raged in his sensitive heart, so often wounded by the

[1] An unsuccessful dramatist.

[2] Seventeen according to Dusaulx, and eighteen according to Barruel-Beauvert.

[3] At six, according to Dusaulx, and at seven according to Barruel.

caressing hand of hypocrisy, and, above all, of those amiable passions which still give him pleasure even though they distress his soul. I wept for him in all sincerity. I found a secret, voluptuous satisfaction in making this offering of sympathetic tears, evoked, it may be, in part by the thought of my own present position no less than by the narrative to which I listened. For the good Jean-Jacques in his divine Memoirs portrayed a woman whom he has worshipped, in language so enchanting, so amiable, so freshly coloured, and so delicate that I seemed to recognise you in the picture. I enjoyed the delicious thought of your resemblance to it, and this enjoyment was my exclusive privilege and prerogative."

This is the testimony of youth and enthusiasm—of an enthusiastic youth, in fact, who had his own quarrel with the Encyclopædists, by whom, for reasons which do not concern us, the Academy door had been slammed in his face. He goes on to tell us how Jean-Jacques concluded his reading with "a solemn epilogue," assuring his hearers that he had told them the truth, speaking without fear or favour, that anyone who dared to contradict his statements was a liar and impostor, and that any one who regards his character and conduct as dishonourable "is himself a man who ought to be suppressed."

"No man," Dorat continues, "ever exhibited a more lofty moral pride, or more boldly challenged the judgment of his peers, than did the author of the *Confessions*"; and he concludes:—

"The document of which I have spoken to you is,

in very truth, a masterpiece of genius and simplicity, of candour and moral courage. What a spectacle of giants transformed into dwarves! What a spectacle, too, of men of obscure virtue restored to the reputation which they deserve, and avenged of the malice of their detractors by the bare word of an honest man! He sanctifies, in his work, the memory of every kindness done to him; but he unmasks with equal candour all the charlatans with whom our age abounds."

That was how an admirer wrote under the immediate spell of the eloquence.

The modern reader, reading in cold blood, is differently affected. One still admires, and enjoys, the eloquence, but one is not swept off one's feet by it. One admits that it is a great work of art—a work of genius, even—but one denies the moral grandeur, and shudders at the taste. Any one who hesitates has only to turn to the *Confessions* and consider what it was that Jean-Jacques confessed, in order to attain conviction. He confessed that, if he had not been magnanimous, Madame d'Houdetot would have been seduced; and Madame d'Houdetot was still living, and still in Paris. He confessed that Madame de Boufflers had thrown herself at his head; and Madame de Boufflers, who was also alive, was his benefactress. He confessed that Thérèse had conspired with him to send her children to the Foundling Hospital; and Thérèse was still living with him, and he professed that she was his wife. He confessed these faults—not only his own faults, but the faults (real or imaginary) of women who had favoured him, to a company assembled for the express

purpose of listening to the calumnious avowals. Comment is superfluous, and there is no excuse. Or rather, the only excuse is that Jean Jacques sincerely believed that these confessions would redound to his honour and glory, and that excuse is only valid because it is a proof that he was mad.

It seemed, for a moment, as if he would really gain his end and achieve glory through his shamelessness. The *Confessions*, Dorat tells us, were the talk of Paris, and even the King of Sweden asked to be allowed to borrow a copy of them. When Paris had taken time to reflect, however, its opinion was unfavourable, and Dorat was left almost alone in his enthusiasm. The only one of Jean-Jacques' enemies to be seriously perturbed about the readings was Madame d'Épinay. Thérèse presumably did not understand that they affected her. Madame de Boufflers was too great a lady, and Madame d'Houdetot was too indifferent, and too happy in the love of Saint-Lambert, to interfere; but Madame d'Épinay wrote to the lieutenant of police. "I think it would be a good idea," she wrote, "if you would speak to Jean-Jacques yourself—gently enough to leave him without cause for complaint, but firmly enough to prevent him from doing it again"; and the lieutenant of police conveyed the intimation, and the readings stopped.

They were suspended the more readily because Jean-Jacques himself was dissatisfied with the effect which they produced. This is his own picture of the scene, and it is very different from that of Dorat:—

"All the company kept silence. The only one of

them who seemed to me to be moved was Madame d'Egmont. She trembled visibly, but she quickly pulled herself together, and refrained from speaking, just as the others did. That was all the profit that I derived from my reading and the declaration with which I closed it."

He was displeased, too, with the behaviour of the listeners who were privileged to take notes of his discourse :—

"They never noted any of the passages which were favourable to my character; but they never failed to take a very careful note, indeed, of any passages in which the truth compelled the author to accuse himself and take blame upon his shoulders."

Consequently :—

"The most sacred deposit of friendship became in their hands the instrument of treachery. They represented my errors as vices ; they treated my peccadilloes as crimes; they spoke of the follies of my youth as if they were foul deeds, deliberately done after I had reached years of discretion."

It was discouraging ; but no one who has read the *Confessions* can feel surprised. It may be that Jean-Jacques exaggerates the chilliness of their reception, for he always looked at all such hostile manifestations through a magnifying glass ; but there is no denying that the *Confessions* lent themselves to the purposes of his detractors, and invited the mockery of the scornful ; and it is not to be supposed that either

open enmity or covert envy was slow to grasp so good a handle.

The fact remains, at any rate, that the reading of the *Confessions* was a failure. Intended to rehabilitate Jean-Jacques' reputation, it left that reputation where it was. The little stir that it made "fizzled out," so to say, leaving hardly any trace behind; and the few years of old age through which we have still to follow Jean-Jacques, though marked by distress, despondency, and ineradicable suspicions, are devoid of sensational incident, and almost devoid of incident of any kind.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Last years in Paris—The hero-worshippers of the younger generation—Reminiscences of Dusaulx, Eymar, Corancez, and Bernardin de Saint Pierre—The writing of the *Rêveries*—And of the *Dialogues*—Further evidence of insanity—The final *coup de théâtre*.

His last years brought Jean-Jacques quite near to the French Revolution. It was to be his revolution in so far as it was any man's. His books were to be the Scriptures of such men as Robespierre and Saint-Just, and of such women as Madame Roland,—to provide them with their formulæ, their phrases, and their sentimentalism—to be quoted in justification of their excesses and intolerance. The hides of the aristocrats, it has been picturesquely said, were to be used to bind the second edition of the *Contrat Social*. One looks, therefore, as one examines the records of his final period, for some sign that he foresaw the great upheaval—the new heaven and the new earth—the kingdom that was to come by violence in his name.

One looks in vain. There is nothing whatever in our picture of Jean-Jacques' declining days that suggests Moses on the heights of Pisgah gazing wistfully towards the Promised Land to which he had led the way, but which he might not enter. Our picture is rather of a disillusioned sage,—a "dis-

gruntled "egoist, careless of any cause, a man with a grievance, indifferent to everything except his grievance. He got no satisfaction from the thought that he had done his work, and that the written word remained, that he had cast his bread upon the waters, and would see it after many days. "Would to God," he said to one friend, "that I had never written a line!" And to another: "If there is one thing that I can boast of, it is that I began to write late, and ceased to write early." Even the *Contrat Social* had ceased to mean to him what it continued to mean to his disciples. "The people who claim to understand it," he said, "are much cleverer than I am"; and the question which haunted him was not: What effect were his doctrines producing? but rather: What were people thinking and saying about him? Did they admit that he was virtuous? Or did they calumniate him behind his back?

We have several pictures of this final phase: from Dusaulx,[1] the Girondin, whom Marat afterwards saved from execution on the ground that he was "an inoffensive bore"; from Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the author of *Paul et Virginie*; from Eymar,[2] who travelled from Marseilles to make his acquaintance; from Corancez, his compatriot. The first-named, having quarrelled with him, was prejudiced against him; the others were prejudiced in his favour. But the testimony of his friends coincides with that of his

[1] Dusaulx had been commissary of gendarmerie at Nancy, but came to Paris to pursue a literary career. Ultimately he was made librarian at the Arsenal.

[2] A contributor to the *Encyclopædia*, and one of the founders of the *Journal de Paris*—the first French daily newspaper.

enemy in the main. The difference between their depositions lies not in the things they say, but in the tone in which they say them. There was, in fact, very little to be said by either of them, except that Jean-Jacques lived humbly and harmlessly, ignored and forgotten by the great, inclining more and more to misanthropy, haunted more and more by the hallucination that his footsteps were dogged by spies.

No patrons helped him nowadays. He lodged with Thérèse on the fourth or fifth floor of a house in the Rue de la Platière, paying rent at last, supplementing his fixed income of about £50 a year by copying music. His apartment was very small, consisting only, according to one account, of a kitchen and a bedroom. But he lived *bourgeoisement*. Thérèse, on the strength of the fantastic illegal ceremony at Monquin, had blossomed into Madame Rousseau, and, wrapped in her new respectability, missed no opportunity of speaking of "my husband." And the men of the new generation climbed the stairs with reverent steps.

One finds an illustration of the sincerity of their reverence in Eymar's story of one of his own visits. A woman of the town, we gather, lived in the same house, on one of the lower floors, and often tried to waylay Jean-Jacques' callers for purposes of her own. One day she waylaid Eymar himself with beaming smiles, offering him the pleasure of her company. "Madame," replied the young hero-worshipper, "I have just been communing with the Philosophical, and I am therefore in no mood for the enjoyment of the Voluptuous"; and he bowed and passed on, leaving the lady to her amazement.

Eymar, however, having to return to the south,
er came to know Jean Jacques very well. The one
he new acquaintances who was admitted to closest
macy was Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who stood
him, for many years, in much the same relation in
ch Froude stood to Carlyle. Our knowledge of
manner of the master's daily life is chiefly derived
n his unfinished *Essai sur J. J. Rousseau*; and
was a monotonous and simple round which a
agraph suffices to describe. Jean-Jacques, we
l, rose early, and copied music until dinner-time.
en he met his young friend at a café in the
amps Elysées, and they went for a long walk
ether, generally in the Bois de Boulogne. He
a good walker, who could go far without fatigue,
he "never turned round to stare at a woman,
ever beautiful." Returning home, he supped,
sometimes entertained his friends, and sat late
ing with them. And that was all; his whole life
olving in that simple orbit. "There was," says
faithful friend, "an indefinable amiability in his
rcourse, and a vague something which inspired
and respect."

No doubt. It has been well said, and often said,
Jean-Jacques' life was a moral evolution. In so
s virtue is passive and static, he had at last, in
own words, "become virtuous." He evinced
, if any, jealousy of successful rivals. He was
wn to praise Voltaire, and Corancez declares that
never heard him speak ill of any one whatever."
never exploited his notoriety for money; he
for no favours in the ante-chambers of the great;
copied music with punctilious exactitude: the

enemies think—those implacable enemies who, as you know, have their spies everywhere, and never for a single instant lose sight of me? This very evening, you may be sure, they would go about saying: 'Jean-Jacques has poisoned Ducis,'[1] and everybody who heard the story would believe it."

The story is not to be dismissed as a malicious invention because it is related by Dusaulx. Corancez, who declared that Dusaulx had shamelessly traduced Jean-Jacques, and whose pamphlet was put out as a reply to Dusaulx's calumnies, tells several stories of just the same nature and purport. He differs from Dusaulx only in telling them in sorrow rather than in anger.

There is the story, for instance, of Jean-Jacques' reception of Gluck, whom Corancez brought to see him. Jean-Jacques, we read, told Gluck that "he was sorry to see a man of his advanced age crawling up four pairs of stairs, and warmly requested that he would not take the trouble for the future." For what reason? Was Gluck, then—the harmless Gluck—a member of the conspiracy against him? It appeared so. Jean-Jacques, in the remote past when he was a musical critic, had said that the French language did not lend itself to the purposes of the musical composer. Gluck had successfully set French lyrics to music. He only did this, said Jean-Jacques, "in order to give me the lie"; and therefore he made offensive remarks to Gluck, and turned him out of his apartment.

Then there is the story of the suspicions which

[1] Ducis adapted several of Shakespeare's plays for the French stage, and succeeded to Voltaire's seat in the Academy.

sprang up in Jean Jacques' breast when he was passing the greengrocer's shop. The greengrocer's price-list revealed the machinations of his foes, and he delivered himself as follows :—

"They employ to attack me on all sides a more subtle ingenuity than would be requisite for the government of the entire continent of Europe. The price which *I* pay for peas is only so much. Pray tell me, if you can, what is the explanation of this difference in my favour."

His own explanation was that his enemies had bribed the greengrocer to impose charity on him against his will. He was quite sure that he was right. His suspicions, says Corancez, "imprinted on the whole of his face an expression truly horrible."

One could accumulate such anecdotes almost *ad infinitum* ; and Jean-Jacques' own writings at this period are our best confirmation of their substantial accuracy.

He wrote voluminously. It was impossible for him ever to stop writing for very long together. Writing had come to be almost a disease with him. He still liked not only to write, but to make several copies of everything that he wrote. But his purpose in writing was no longer to discuss first principles or to reform society. He had been interested in great questions in his time ; but now the only subject on which he cared to instruct the public and posterity was himself. If he reiterated that he was virtuous, people might end by believing him, and if he

persevered in unmasking the conspiracy, the conspirators might at last be brought to shame. To this end he wrote his *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, and the Dialogues entitled *Rousseau jugé de Jean-Jacques*.

The former volume contains some of his best work; the latter some of his worst. The latter exhibits him constantly, the former occasionally, in his maddest mood.

In the *Rêveries*, for example, there is a delightfully poetical description—far better than that in the *Confessions*—of the idyllic sojourn in the Ile de Saint Pierre. But there is also an amazing passage in which Jean-Jacques describes a lonely walk on one of the Jura mountains. He had lain down in the brush-wood to meditate and dream. He believed himself to be alone; he likened himself to a traveller discovering a desert island. But then he heard a mysterious noise, and crept forward on his hands and knees to solve the mystery. Within twenty yards of his solitude, it seemed, there was a stocking factory; and, as he looked down on it, bitter and cruel thoughts assailed him. So even in these mountain fastnesses, he reflected, he could not escape from the wrath of men who had banded themselves together to torment him! He was quite sure that "there were not two men in that factory who were not implicated in the plot of which the preacher Montmollin had made himself the ringleader, and which was being engineered from far away."

There is madness there if anywhere; and in the *Dialogues* madness manifests itself from the first page until the last.

Frenchman, in this work, converses with Jean
es about Rousseau, not knowing that Rousseau
ean-Jacques are one and the same man; and
Jacques tells his interlocutor at great length—
ength of five hundred and forty pages—the story
e oppression and persecution of Rousseau. He
d upon, he says. His letters are opened in the
and he is shadowed by the police. Beggars
his alms, and boot blacks refuse to clean his
When he tries to buy a book, he is told that
ut of stock; when he tries to engage a seat in a
he is told that the coach is not plying that day.
e stare at him in public places, and spit on him
his back is turned. The rumour has been cir-
d that he is suffering from a shameful malady,
e is accused of cheating the clients for whom
ies music. And all that is contrived by "the
ophers"—by Grimm, and Diderot, and Hume,
l'Alembert—and by Madame d'Epinay, and
, and primarily, by Choiseul.
amazing farrago truly—with nothing in it that
ed stop to argue about—nothing that one need
e to disprove! The philosophers had always
l Jean-Jacques with consideration until he had
himself impossible. Great ladies had petted
From Choiseul he might have obtained a
natic appointment, if he had liked. Even when
d been persecuted, the persecution had been
cted with some regard for his susceptibilities;
e had now been safe for many years from all
r of molestation, and really had nothing to
ain of except that the mob was too curious
him, and that the leaders of society had been

content to let him drop out of sight. The conspiracy, in short, had no existence—and had never had any existence—except in his own imagination.

He believed in it, however, as fanatics believe in their religions. He believed that the enmity of the conspirators would pursue him even beyond the grave—that they had laid dark plans for the suppression of anything that he might write for posthumous publication. That was another grave risk against which cunning precautions must be taken. Plan, therefore, should be met with plan, and a *coup de théâtre* should definitely secure the immortality of his fame.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Failure of the *coup de théâtre*—Jean Jacques "Alone in the world"—Fears of poverty—Appeals "to the French people" for help—Accepts the Marquis de Girardin's invitation to Ermenonville—The mystery of his sudden death—A pension for Thérèse.

THIS was Jean-Jacques' scheme, as described in his own mad narrative:—

"Twenty years' experience," he wrote, "had taught me what kind of loyalty I might expect from the persons about me who pretended to be my friends. To entrust my manuscript to any of them was tantamount to handing it over to my persecutors. Enveloped by my enemies as I was, I had no means of approaching any one else."

What then? What step to take in order that the *Dialogues* might not perish, but might be preserved to set forth the grievances and the glory of their author? He had thought out a way:—

"It occurred to me to make a copy of the manuscript, and deposit it in a church upon an altar. In order that my act might be attended with every possible solemnity, I selected for my purpose the great altar of the cathedral of Notre Dame. Anywhere else, I felt, my deposit might easily be hidden

or destroyed by monks or priests, or might fall the possession of my enemies. There, the sens which I should cause might result in bringing manuscript under the notice of the King hir That was what I wanted to happen, and there no other means of bringing it about."

So Jean-Jacques wrote out a dedication—a p addressed "to the God of Truth and Justice". packed up his parcel, and inscribed it: "A De placed in the hands of Providence"; and carried the cathedral at about two o'clock on the after of February 24, 1776. The chancel gates were c against him, and he could not enter.

"As soon as I realised this," he writes, "I seized with giddiness, like a man struck with apop and when the giddiness had passed I felt suc upheaval of my whole being as I had never ex enced before. I thought, in the first shock o emotion, that Heaven itself was conspiring to the iniquity of men. I hurried out of the ch resolved never to enter it again as long as I l and, no longer resisting my agitation, I spen remainder of the day in wandering about the st knowing neither where I was nor whither I was g until at last fatigue and the falling of the shad evening compelled me to return home, overcome weariness, and dazed with agony of mind."

Baffled thus, he resorted to other devices. made another copy of the manuscript, which he to a young Englishman whom he had know Wooton. He drafted a circular letter to the F

nation, addressed "to every Frenchman who loves truth and justice," and, stationing himself at the street corners, handed copies of it to passing strangers. When the strangers showed him by their manner that they regarded him as a madman he adopted another plan, and posted copies of his circular to all the unknown correspondents who wrote to him about his work. And so forth, and so forth, consuming his last energies in fighting imaginary foes, and baffling an imaginary intrigue.

Wearying of the struggle at last, however, he desisted from it, and the final picture, drawn by his own hand, in the *Rêveries*, written in 1777 and 1778, shows him finding a melancholy satisfaction in solitude:—

"Behold me," he writes, "alone in the world, without a brother, without a neighbour, with no society but my own. The most sociable and the most affectionate of men has been proscribed by unanimous accord. . . . My life in this world is finished. No one can any more do me either good or evil. I have nothing further either to hope for or to fear, and I dwell in tranquillity at the bottom of the abyss. . . . Let me abandon myself to the melancholy pleasure of holding converse with my own soul. That is the one pleasure of which mankind cannot deprive me."

That is in the first reverie; and in the eighth we read:—

"I lodge in the heart of Paris. When I go out of doors I sigh for the country and for solitude; but

I have to go so far to find them that befo
breathe freely I encounter many heart
sights, and spend half my day in anguish
before attaining the refuge which I set out
But at any rate I am happy when I am le
take my walk. How delightful is the mom
I escape from the company of malignant me
as soon as I find myself among the trees, a
midst of the verdure, I feel that I am in a
Paradise, and experience an inward pleasur
if I were the happiest of humankind."

This does not mean, of course, that he w
happy. It only means that the warm
soothed his senses, and calmed his trouble
and taught him the luxury of woe, and gav
his hours, the illusion of the pilgrim who ha
the journey, and takes his rest in the serene
of Beulah, awaiting the summons, careless
comes. One is glad to think that he had tha
though he achieved it rarely, and enjoyed it
a brief space of time. Presently there w
realities to disturb it—and not realities only,
fresh hallucinations.

Thérèse was ill; Thérèse was unfaith
Jean-Jacques was startled from his dreams
terror—the fear that he had come, or wa
point of coming, to poverty.

Certainly he was poor. We have seen
income was. He told Corancez that he c
afford wine at dinner and supper both,
added:—

"I do not invite you to dine with me, because my circumstances do not permit it. Trifling as might be the expense which your company would occasion, still we should be forced to retrench it by denying ourselves some of the necessaries of life."

He was no poorer now, however, than he had been for many years. The trouble was merely that Thérèse, being temporarily indisposed, had to neglect the house-work. They could not afford to hire a servant, and consequently were uncomfortable. Jean-Jacques, one would think, might have done the house-work himself; there can have been little of it, and he had nothing else to do. Or he might have confided in any one of several friends, who would all have been happy to help him. But he was mad. Being uncomfortable, he pictured himself forlorn, forsaken; and he once more took the world into his confidence. He sat down and composed yet another letter "to the French people." He told the French people all about his distress and his companion's ailments. He appealed to the French people to arrange that he should be received somewhere as a "paying-guest." He would be satisfied, he said, with the most frugal fare; and he would assign his annuities, his furniture, and all his belongings to any one who would take charge of him. This though it was open to him, at any moment, to draw the considerable arrears of the pension assigned to him by George III.[1]

"The French people," puzzled by his insane

[1] Corancez volunteered to procure the payment, but Jean-Jacques would not have it.

appeal, did nothing for him collectively. It was his friends who came to the rescue.

One of his illusions was that he had no friends left. "Once I had friends, but now I have none," he told Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Friends nevertheless rallied round him as usual in his emergency. Comte Duprat offered him a refuge in the neighbourhood of Lyons. He would have liked, he said, to accept the offer, but he was crippled with rheumatism, and could not travel so far: "There is no more oil in the lamp, and the least breath of wind may extinguish it." Corancez offered him his country house at Sceaux. He accepted that invitation, and then changed his mind, and went instead to the house of the Marquis de Girardin at Ermenonville, about twenty miles from Paris.

For that decision, as for so many of Jean-Jacques' decisions, Thérèse seems to have been responsible. Though she was too ill to attend to the house-work in the Rue de la Platière, she was not too ill to fall in love with Jean-Jacques' benefactor's groom. She may, or may not, have been unfaithful to him in previous years; that is a vexed question which is never likely to be set at rest. There is no question whatever of her infidelity to him at the last. When she sold up the furniture in the Paris garret, and hastened to join Jean-Jacques in the country, she was really hastening to join the groom.

That was in the spring of the year 1778; and, on the 3rd of July in the same year, the news reached Paris that Jean-Jacques was dead.

The nature of his death remains one of the unsolved puzzles of literary history. He shot himself;

he died of apoplexy; he took poison; poison was administered to him. Each of these statements has been made; each of them is supported by a certain amount of evidence. But the depositions of the witnesses contradict each other; and there is no convincing reason why one of them rather than another should be believed. Apparently there was something that somebody was anxious to hush up; but even that is more than can be affirmed with certainty. Jean-Jacques was old enough, and ill enough, to be likely to die a natural death; but he was also mad enough to be likely to take his own life in a sudden access of despair. The truth is undiscoverable, and the probabilities are nicely balanced.

Thérèse survived him for a great many years. Sir James Smith, who met her in her later years, says that she "always spoke in the most becoming manner of her husband." It is likely enough that she did so, even though she was then married to her groom. Events had demonstrated to her that she was the widow, in so far as she was a widow, of a great man, and not, as she had so long supposed, of a mere eccentric who copied music for a living, and quarrelled with all his friends, and wrote long meaningless screeds, and was unreasonably angry with her when she accepted presents from fashionable ladies. The rôle of a great man's widow, in short, was thrust upon her, and she filled it according to her lights, and with a keen eye to her pecuniary advantage.

Needing money, she sold the *Confessions* to a publisher, and so helped to circulate the story of her own shame and crime. It may be, seeing how

illiterate she was, that she parted with the manuscript without reading it, and without knowing that it contained the story of her abandonment of her children to the tender mercies of the Foundling Hospital. She must have learnt that it did so, however, when the book was printed; and the fact that she then let the story pass without contradiction is a fresh piece of evidence, ignored by most of the commentators, that the story was true.

True or false, it was tolerably well known, even before the *Confessions* were printed; and the state of public opinion was such that it did not harm her. She wrote, as Jean-Jacques' widow, to Mirabeau, in 1790, asking for assistance; and Mirabeau obtained for her the help that she solicited:—

"I have too much reverence," he wrote, "for the memory of the man whose name you bear to assume the honour of paying you the homage which is due to you from the nation. Pray present your petition to the National Assembly. The representatives of the French people alone have the right to award the treatment which she deserves to the widow of the immortal man of genius whose loss they never cease to deplore."

So she got her pension—a pension of 1500 francs voted on the motion of Jean-Jacques' friend, Eymar—and, two years later, Jean-Jacques' remains were removed from Ermenonville to the Pantheon, where the "grateful country" preserves the ashes of its illustrious men.

It was a consummation which, we may be sure

ld have cheered his last hours if only he could
e foreseen it. But though he had laboured for
his mad way, for many years, he had laboured,
e thought, in vain, and had ended by abandoning
thought of posthumous renown; and his last
ls, if we may believe anything in the obscure
tangled narrative of his end, were not of earthly
of heavenly rewards.

"Look!" he said—so Thérèse told Corancez.
ne sky is clear, and not a cloud is to be seen.
uld you not say that the gate of Heaven is open,
that God is waiting for me?"

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